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# TOM BROWN AT OXFORD:

A SEQUEL TO

SCHOOL DAYS AT RUGBY.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SCHOOL DAYS AT RUGBY," "SCOURING OF THE WHITE HORSE," ETC.

PART FIRST.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

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# TOM BROWN AT OXFORD.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

IN the Michaelmas term, after leaving school, Tom Brown received a summons from the authorities, and went up to matriculate at St. Ambrose's College, Oxford. He presented himself at the college one afternoon, and was examined by one of the tutors, who carried him, and several other youths in like predicament, up to the Senate House the next morning; where they went through the usual forms of subscribing to the articles, and otherwise testifying their loyalty to the established order of things, without much thought perhaps, but in very good faith nevertheless. Having completed the ceremony, by paying his fees, our hero hurried back home, without making any stay in Oxford. He had often passed through it, so that the city had not the charm of novelty for him, and he was anxious to get home; where, as he had never spent an autumn away from school till now, for the first time in his life he was having his fill of hunting and shooting.

He had left school in June, and did not go up to reside at Oxford, till the end of the following January. Seven good months; during a part of which he had indeed read for four hours or so a week with the curate of the parish, but the residue had been exclusively devoted to cricket and field sports. Now, admirable as these institutions are, and beneficial as is their influence on the youth of Britain,



it is possible for a youngster to get too much of them. So it had fallen out with our hero. He was a better horseman and shot, but the total relaxation of all the healthy discipline of school, the regular hours and regular work to which he had been used for so many years, had certainly thrown him back in other ways. The whole man had not grown; so that we must not be surprised to find him quite as boyish, now that we fall in with him again, marching down to St. Ambrose's with a porter wheeling his luggage after him on a truck, as when we left him at the end of his school career.

Tom was, in truth, beginning to feel that it was high time for him to be getting to regular work again of some sort. A landing place is a famous thing, but it is only enjoyable for a time, by any mortal who deserves one at all. So it was with a feeling of unmixed pleasure that he turned in at the St. Ambrose gates, and inquired of the porter what rooms had been allotted to him within those venerable walls.

While the porter consulted his list, the great college sun-dial, over the lodge, which had lately been renovated, caught Tom's eye. The motto underneath, "*Pereunt et imputantur*," stood out, proud of its new gilding, in the bright afternoon's sun of a frosty January day: which motto was raising sundry thoughts in his brain, when the porter came upon the right place in his list, and directed him to the end of his journey: No. 5 staircase, second quadrangle, three-pair back. In which new home we shall leave him to install himself, while we endeavor to give the reader some notion of the college itself.

## CHAPTER I.

### ST. AMBROSE'S COLLEGE.

ST. AMBROSE'S COLLEGE was a moderate sized one. There might have been some seventy or eighty undergraduates in residence, when our hero appeared there as a freshman. Of these, unfortunately for the college, there were a very large proportion of gentlemen-commoners; enough, in fact, with the other men whom they drew round them, and who lived pretty much as they did, to form the largest and leading set in the college. So the college was decidedly fast; in fact, it was *the* fast college of the day.

The chief characteristic of this set was the most reckless extravagance of every kind. London wine merchants furnished them with liqueurs at a guinea a bottle, and wine at five guineas a dozen; Oxford and London tailors vied with one another in providing them with unheard of quantities of the most gorgeous clothing. They drove tandems in all directions, scattering their ample allowances, which they treated as pocket money, about roadside inns and Oxford taverns with open hand, and going tick for every thing which could by possibility be booked. Their cigars cost two guineas a pound; their furniture was the best that could be bought; pineapples, forced fruit, and the most rare preserves figured at their wine parties; they hunted, rode steeple chases by day, played billiards until the gates closed, and then were ready for *vingt-et-une*, unlimited loo, and hot drink in their own rooms, as long as any one could be got to sit up and play.

The fast set then swamped, and gave the tone to the college; at which fact no persons were more astonished and horrified than the authorities of St. Ambrose.

That they of all bodies in the world should be fairly run away with by a set of reckless, loose young spend-thrifts, was indeed a melancholy and unprecedented fact; for the body of fellows of St. Ambrose was as distinguished for learning, morality, and respectability, as any in the university. The foundation was not indeed actually an open one. Oriel at that time alone enjoyed this distinction; but there were a large number of open fellowships, and the income of the college was large, and the livings belonging to it numerous; so that the best men from other colleges were constantly coming in. Some of these of a former generation had been eminently successful in their management of the college. The St. Ambrose undergraduates at one time had carried off almost all the university prizes, and filled the class lists, while maintaining at the same time the highest character for manliness and gentlemanly conduct. This had lasted long enough to establish the fame of the college, and great lords and statesmen had sent their sons there; head-masters had struggled to get the names of their best pupils on the books; in short, every one who had a son, ward, or pupil, whom he wanted to push forward in the world — who was meant to cut a figure, and take the lead among men — left no stone unturned to get him into St. Ambrose's; and thought the first and a very long step gained when he had succeeded.

But the governing bodies of colleges are always on the change, and in the course of things men of other ideas came to rule at St. Ambrose, — shrewd men of the world; men of business, some of them, with good ideas of making the most of their advantages; who said, "Go to: why

should we not make the public pay for the great benefits we confer on them? Have we not the very best article in the educational market to supply — almost a monopoly of it — and shall we not get the highest price for it?" So by degrees they altered many things in the college. In the first place, under their auspices, gentlemen-commoners increased and multiplied; in fact, the eldest sons of baronets, even of squires, were scarcely admitted on any other footing. As these young gentlemen paid double fees to the college, and had great expectations of all sorts, it could not be expected that they should be subject to quite the same discipline as the common run of men, who would have to make their own way in the world. So the rules as to attendance at chapel and lectures were relaxed in their favor; and, that they might find all things suitable to persons in their position, the kitchen and buttery were worked up to a high state of perfection, and St. Ambrose, from having been one of the most reasonable, had come to be about the most expensive college in the university. These changes worked as their promoters probably desired that they should work, and the college was full of rich men, and commanded in the university the sort of respect which riches bring with them; but the old reputation, though still strong out of doors, was beginning sadly to wane within the university precincts. Fewer and fewer of the St. Ambrose men appeared in the class lists, or amongst the prize-men. They no longer led the debates at the Union; the boat lost place after place on the river; the eleven got beaten in all their matches. The inaugurators of these changes had passed away in their turn, and at last a reaction had commenced. The fellows recently elected, and who were in residence at the time we write of, were for the most part men of great attainments, all of them men who had taken very high honors. The electors



naturally enough had chosen them as the most likely persons to restore, as tutors, the golden days of the college ; and they had been careful in the selection to confine themselves to very quiet and studious men, such as were likely to remain up at Oxford, passing over men of more popular manners and active spirits, who would be sure to flit soon into the world, and be of little more service to St. Ambrose.

But these were not the men to get any hold on the fast set who were now in the ascendant. It was not in the nature of things that they should understand each other ; in fact, they were hopelessly at war, and the college was getting more and more out of gear in consequence.

What they could do, however, they were doing ; and under their fostering care were growing up a small set, including most of the scholars, who were likely, so far as they were concerned, to retrieve the college character in the schools ; but they were too much like their tutors, men who did little else but read. They neither wished nor were likely to gain the slightest influence on the fast set. The best men amongst them, too, were diligent readers of the *Tracts for the Times*, and followers of the able leaders of the high-church party, which was then a growing one ; and this led them also to form such friendships as they made amongst out-college men of their own way of thinking — with high churchmen, rather than St. Ambrose men. So they lived very much to themselves, and scarcely interfered with the dominant party.

Lastly, there was the boating set, which was beginning to revive in the college, partly from the natural disgust of any body of young Englishmen, at finding themselves distanced in an exercise requiring strength and pluck, and partly from the fact that the captain for the time being was one of the best oars in the university boat, and also a

deservedly popular character. He was now in his third year of residence, had won the pair-oar race, and had pulled seven in the great yearly match with Cambridge, and by constant hard work had managed to carry the St. Ambrose boat up to the fifth place on the river. He will be introduced to you, gentle readers, when the proper time comes; at present, we are only concerned with a bird's-eye view of the college, that you may feel more or less at home in it. The boating set was not so separate or marked as the reading set, melting on one side into, and keeping up more or less connection with, the fast set, and also commanding a sort of half allegiance from most of the men who belonged to neither of the other sets. The minor divisions, of which of course there were many, need not be particularized, as the above general classification will be enough for the purposes of this history.

Our hero, on leaving school, had bound himself solemnly to write all his doings and thoughts to the friend whom he had left behind him: distance and separation were to make no difference whatever in their friendship. This compact had been made on one of their last evenings at Rugby. They were sitting together in the sixth-form room, Tom splicing the handle of a favorite cricket bat, and Arthur reading a volume of Raleigh's works. The doctor had lately been alluding to the "History of the World," and had excited the curiosity of the active-minded amongst his pupils about the great navigator, statesman, soldier, author, and fine gentleman. So Raleigh's works were seized on by various voracious young readers, and carried out of the school library; and Arthur was now deep in a volume of the "Miscellanies," curled up on a corner of the sofa. Presently, Tom heard something between a groan and a protest, and, looking up, demanded explanations; in answer to which, Arthur, in a voice half furious and half fearful, read out:—

"And be sure of this, thou shalt never find a friend in thy young years whose conditions and qualities will please thee after thou comest to more discretion and judgment; and then all thou givest is lost, and all wherein thou shalt trust such a one will be discovered."

"You don't mean that's Raleigh's?"

"Yes — here it is, in his first letter to his son."

"What a cold-blooded old Philistine," said Tom.

"But it can't be true, do you think?" said Arthur.

And, in short, after some personal reflections on Sir Walter, they then and there resolved that, so far as they were concerned, it was not, could not, and should not be true; that they would remain faithful, the same to each other, and the greatest friends in the world, through I know not what separations, trials, and catastrophes. And for the better insuring this result, a correspondence, regular as the recurring months, was to be maintained. It had already lasted through the long vacation and up to Christmas without sensibly dragging, though Tom's letters had been something of the shortest in November, when he had had lots of shooting, and two days a week with the hounds. Now, however, having fairly got to Oxford, he determined to make up for all short-comings. His first letter from college, taken in connection with the previous sketch of the place, will probably accomplish the work of introduction better than any detailed account by a third party; and it is therefore given here verbatim:—

"ST. AMBROSE, OXFORD, *February, 184-*.

"MY DEAR GEORDIE,—

"According to promise, I write to tell you how I get on up here, and what sort of a place Oxford is. Of course, I don't know much about it yet, having been only up some two weeks; but you shall have my first impressions.



“Well, first and foremost, it’s an awfully idle place; at any rate, for us freshmen. Fancy now. I am in twelve lectures a week of an hour each — Greek Testament, first book of Herodotus, second *Æneid*, and first book of Euclid! There’s a treat! Two hours a day; all over by twelve, or one at latest; and no extra work at all, in the shape of copies of verses, themes, or other exercises.

“I think sometimes I’m back in the lower fifth; for we don’t get through more than we used to do there; and if you were to hear the men construe, it would make your hair stand on end. Where on earth can they have come from? unless they blunder on purpose, as I often think. Of course, I never look at a lecture before I go in; I know it all nearly by heart; so it would be sheer waste of time. I hope I shall take to reading something or other by myself; but you know I never was much of a hand at sapping, and, for the present, the light work suits me well enough, for there’s lots to see and learn about in this place.

“We keep very gentlemanly hours. Chapel every morning at eight, and evening at seven. You must attend once a day, and twice on Sundays — at least, that’s the rule of our college — and be in gates by twelve o’clock at night. Besides which, if you’re a decently steady fellow, you ought to dine in hall perhaps four days a week. Hall is at five o’clock. And now you have the sum total. All the rest of your time you may just do what you like with.

“So much for our work and hours. Now for the place. Well, it’s a grand old place, certainly; and I dare say if a fellow goes straight in it, and gets creditably through his three years, he may end by loving it as much as we do the old schoolhouse and quadrangle at Rugby. Our college is a fair specimen: a venerable old front of

crumbling stone, fronting the street, into which two or three other colleges look also. Over the gateway is a large room, where the college examinations go on, when there are any; and, as you enter, you pass the porter's lodge, where resides our janitor, a bustling little man, with a potbelly, whose business it is to put down the time at which the men come in at night, and to keep all discomfited tradesmen, stray dogs, and bad characters generally, out of the college.

"The large quadrangle into which you come first, is bigger than ours at Rugby, and a much more solemn and sleepy sort of a place, with its little gables and old mulioned windows. One side is occupied by the hall and chapel; the principal's house takes up half another side; and the rest is divided into staircases, on each of which are six or eight sets of rooms, inhabited by us undergraduates, with here and there a tutor or fellow dropped down amongst us (in the first-floor rooms, of course), not exactly to keep order, but to act as a sort of ballast. This quadrangle is the show part of the college, and is generally respectable and quiet, which is a good deal more than can be said for the inner quadrangle, which you get at through a passage leading out of the other. The rooms aint half so large or good in the inner quad; and here's where all we freshmen live, besides a lot of the older undergraduates who don't care to change their rooms. Only one tutor has rooms here; and I should think, if he's a reading man, it wont be long before he clears out; for all sorts of high jinks go on on the grass-plot, and the row on the staircases is often as bad, and not half so respectable, as it used to be in the middle passage in the last week of the half year.

"My rooms are what they call garrets, right up in the roof, with a commanding view of college tiles and chim-

ney pots, and of houses at the back. No end of cats; both college Toms and strangers haunt the neighborhood, and I am rapidly learning cat-talk from them; but I'm not going to stand it, — I don't want to know cat-talk. The college Toms are protected by the statutes, I believe; but I'm going to buy an air-gun for the benefit of the strangers. My rooms are pleasant enough, at the top of the kitchen staircase, and separated from all mankind by a great, iron-clamped, outer door, my oak, which I sport when I go out, or want to be quiet; sitting-room eighteen by twelve, bedroom twelve by eight, and a little cupboard for the scout.

“Ah, Geordie, the scout is an institution! Fancy me waited upon and valeted by a stout party in black, of quiet, gentlemanly manners, like the benevolent father in a comedy. He takes the deepest interest in all my possessions and proceedings, and is evidently used to good society, to judge by the amount of crockery and glass, wines, liquors, and grocery, which he thinks indispensable for my due establishment. He has also been good enough to recommend me to many tradesmen who are ready to supply these articles in any quantities; each of whom has been here already a dozen times, cap in hand, and vowing that it is quite immaterial when I pay, — which is very kind of them; but, with the highest respect for Friend Perkins (my scout) and his obliging friends, I shall make some inquiries before ‘letting in’ with any of them. He waits on me in hall, where we go in full fig of cap and gown at five, and get very good dinners, and cheap enough. It is rather a fine old room, with a good, arched, black oak ceiling and high panelling, hung round with pictures of old swells, bishops and lords chiefly, who have endowed the college in some way, or at least have fed here in times gone by, and for whom, ‘*cæterisque benefactoribus nostris*,’ we daily give thanks in a long Latin grace, which one

of the undergraduates (I think it must be) goes and rattles out at the end of the high table, and then comes down again from the dais to his own place. No one feeds at the high table except the dons and the gentlemen-commoners, who are undergraduates in velvet caps and silk gowns: why they wear these instead of cloth and serge, I haven't yet made out, — I believe it is because they pay double fees; but they seem uncommonly wretched up at the high table, and I should think would sooner pay double to come to the other end of the hall.

“The chapel is a quaint little place, about the size of the chancel of Lutterworth Church. It just holds us all comfortably. The attendance is regular enough, but I don't think the men care about it a bit in general. Several I can see bring in Euclids, and other lecture books, and the service is gone through at a great pace. I couldn't think at first why some of the men seemed so uncomfortable and stiff about the legs at the morning service, but I find that they are the hunting set, and come in with pea-coats over their pinks, and trousers over their leather breeches and top-boots; which accounts for it. There are a few others who seem very devout, and bow a good deal, and turn towards the altar at different parts of the service. These are of the Oxford high-church school, I believe; but I shall soon find out more about them. On the whole, I feel less at home, I am sorry to say, at present in the chapel than anywhere else.

“I was very nearly forgetting a great institution of the college, which is the buttery-hatch, just opposite the hall-door. Here abides the fat old butler (all the servants at St. Ambrose's are portly), and serves out limited bread, butter, and cheese, and unlimited beer, brewed by himself, for an hour in the morning, at noon, and again at supper-time. Your scout always fetches you a pint or so on each



occasion. in case you should want it, and if you don't, it falls to him ; but I can't say that my fellow gets much, for I am naturally a thirsty soul, and cannot often resist the malt myself, coming up, as it does, fresh and cool, in one of the silver tankards, of which we seem to have an endless supply.

"I spent a day or two in the first week, before I got shaken down into my place here, in going round and seeing the other colleges, and finding out what great men had been at each (one got a taste for that sort of work from the doctor, and I'd nothing else to do). Well, I never was more interested: fancy ferreting out Wycliffe, the Black Prince, Sir Walter Raleigh, Pym, Hampden, Laud, Ireton, Butler, and Addison, in one afternoon. I walked about two inches taller in my trencher cap after it. Perhaps I may be going to make dear friends with some fellow who will change the history of England. Why shouldn't I? There must have been freshmen once who were chums of Wycliffe of Queen's, or Raleigh of Oriel. I mooned up and down the High Street, staring at all the young faces in caps, and wondering which of them would turn out great generals or statesmen or poets. Some of them will, of course, for there must be a dozen at least, I should think, in every generation of undergraduates, who will have a good deal to say to the ruling and guiding of the British nation before they die.

"But, after all, the river is the feature of Oxford, to my mind ; a glorious stream, not five minutes' walk from the colleges, broad enough in most places for three boats to row abreast. I expect I shall take to boating furiously; I have been down the river three or four times already with some other freshmen, and it is glorious exercise ; that I can see, though we bungle and cut crabs desperately at present.

“Here’s a long yarn I’m spinning for you ; and I dare say after all you’ll say it tells you nothing, and you’d rather have twenty lines about the men, and what they’re thinking about, and the meaning and inner life of the place, and all that. Patience, patience ! I don’t know any thing about it myself yet, and have only had time to look at the shell, which is a very handsome and stately affair ; you shall have the kernel, if ever I get at it, in due time.

“And now write me a long letter directly, and tell me about the doctor, and who are in the sixth, and how the house goes on, and what sort of an eleven there’ll be, and what you are all doing and thinking about. Come up here and try for a scholarship ; I’ll take you in and show you the lions. Remember me to all old friends. Ever yours,  
affectionately, T. B.”

## CHAPTER II.

### A ROW ON THE RIVER.

WITHIN a day or two of the penning of this celebrated epistle, which created quite a sensation in the sixth-form room as it went the round after tea, Tom realized one of the objects of his young Oxford ambition, and succeeded in embarking on the river in a skiff by himself, with such results as are now to be described. He had already been down several times in pair-oar and four-oar boats, with an old oar to pull stroke and another to steer and coach the young idea, but he was not satisfied with these essays. He could not believe that he was such a bad oar as the old hands made him out to be, and thought that it must be the fault of the other freshmen who were learning with him that the boat made so little way and rolled so much. He had been such a proficient in all the Rugby games, that he couldn't realize the fact of his unreadiness in a boat. Pulling looked a simple thing enough — much easier than tennis; and he had made a capital start at the latter game, and been highly complimented by the marker after his first hour in the little court. He forgot that cricket and fives are capital training for tennis, but that rowing is a speciality, of the rudiments of which he was wholly ignorant. And so, in full confidence that, if he could only have a turn or two alone, he should not only satisfy himself, but everybody else, that he was a heaven-born oar, he refused all offers of companionship, and started on the afternoon of a fine February day down to



the boats for his trial trip. He had watched his regular companions well out of college, and gave them enough start to make sure that they would be off before he himself could arrive at the St. Ambrose's dressing-room at Hall's, and chuckled, as he came within sight of the river, to see the freshmen's boat in which he generally performed go plunging away past the university barge, keeping three different times with four oars, and otherwise demeaning itself so as to become an object of mirthful admiration to all beholders.

Tom was punted across to Hall's in a state of great content, which increased when in answer to his casual inquiry, the managing man informed him that not a man of his college was about the place. So he ordered a skiff with as much dignity and coolness as he could command, and hastened up-stairs to dress. He appeared again, carrying his boating coat and cap. They were quite new, so he would not wear them; nothing about him should betray the freshman on this day if he could help it.

"Is my skiff ready?"

"All right, sir; this way, sir," said the manager, conducting him to a good, safe-looking craft. "Any gentleman going to steer, sir?"

"No," said Tom, superciliously; "you may take out the rudder."

"Going quite alone, sir? Better take one of our boys—find you a very light one. Here, Bill!"—and he turned to summon a juvenile waterman to take charge of our hero.

"Take out the rudder; do you hear?" interrupted Tom. "I wont have a steerer."

"Well, sir, as you please," said the manager, proceeding to remove the degrading appendage. "The river's

rather high, please to remember, sir. You must mind the mill-stream at Ifley Lock. I suppose you can swim?"

"Yes, of course," said Tom, settling himself on his cushion. "Now, shove her off."

The next moment he was well out in the stream, and left to his own resources. He got his sculls out successfully enough, and, though feeling by no means easy on his seat, proceeded to pull very deliberately past the barges, stopping his sculls in the air to feather accurately, in the hopes of deceiving spectators into the belief that he was an old hand just going out for a gentle paddle. The manager watched him for a minute, and turned to his work with an aspiration that he might not come to grief.

But no thought of grief was on Tom's mind as he dropped gently down, impatient for the time when he should pass the mouth of the Cherwell, and so, having no longer critical eyes to fear, might put out his whole strength, and give himself at least, if not the world, assurance of a waterman.

The day was a very fine one, a bright sun shining, and a nice fresh breeze blowing across the stream, but not enough to ruffle the water seriously. Some heavy storms up Gloucestershire way had cleared the air, and swollen the stream at the same time; in fact, the river was as full as it could be without overflowing its banks — a state in which, of all others, it is the least safe for boating experiments. Fortunately, in those days there were no outriggers. Even the racing skiffs were comparatively safe craft, and would be now characterized as tubs; while the real tubs (in one of the safest of which the prudent manager had embarked our hero) were of such build that it required considerable ingenuity actually to upset them.

If any ordinary amount of bungling could have done

it, Tom's voyage would have terminated within a hundred yards of the Cherwell. While he had been sitting quiet and merely paddling, and almost letting the stream carry him down, the boat had trimmed well enough; but now, taking a long breath, he leaned forward, and dug his sculls into the water, pulling them through with all his strength. The consequence of this feat was that the handles of the sculls came into violent collision in the middle of the boat, the knuckles of his right hand were barked, his left scull unshipped, and the head of his skiff almost blown round by the wind before he could restore order on board.

"Never mind; try again," thought he, after the sensation of disgust had passed off, and a glance at the shore showed him that there were no witnesses. "Of course, I forgot, one hand must go over the other. It might have happened to any one. Let me see. Which hand shall I keep uppermost? The left; that's the weakest." And away he went again, keeping his newly acquired fact painfully in mind, and so avoiding further collision amidships for four or five strokes. But, as, in other sciences, the giving of undue prominence to one fact brings others inexorably on the head of the student to avenge his neglect of them, so it happened with Tom in his practical study of the science of rowing, that by thinking of the hands he forgot his seat, and the necessity of trimming properly. Whereupon the old tub began to rock fearfully, and the next moment he missed the water altogether with his right scull, and subsided backwards, not without struggles, into the bottom of the boat; while the half-stroke which he had pulled with his left hand sent her head well into the bank.

Tom picked himself up, and settled himself on his bench again, a sadder and a wiser man; as the truth began to dawn upon him that pulling, especially sculling,

does not, like reading and writing, come by nature. However, he addressed himself manfully to his task; savage indeed, and longing to drive a hole in the bottom of the old tub, but as resolved as ever to get to Sandford and back before hall time, or perish in the attempt.

He shoved himself off the bank, and, warned by his last mishap, got out into mid stream, and there, moderating his ardor, and contenting himself with a slow and steady stroke, was progressing satisfactorily, and beginning to recover his temper, when a loud shout startled him; and, looking over his shoulder at the imminent risk of an upset, he beheld the fast sailer the Dart, close hauled on a wind, and almost aboard of him. Utterly ignorant of what was the right thing to do, he held on his course, and passed close under the bows of the miniature cutter, the steersman having jammed his helm hard down, shaking her in the wind, to prevent running over the skiff, and solacing himself with pouring maledictions on Tom and his craft, in which the man who had hold of the sheets and the third, who was lounging in the bows, heartily joined. Tom was out of ear-shot before he had collected vituperation enough to hurl back at them, and was, moreover, already in the difficult navigation of the Gut, where, notwithstanding all his efforts, he again ran aground; but with this exception he arrived without other mishap at Ifley, where he lay on his sculls with much satisfaction, and shouted, "Lock — lock!"

The lock-keeper appeared to the summons, but instead of opening the gates seized a long boat-hook and rushed towards our hero, calling on him to mind the mill-stream, and pull his right-hand scull; notwithstanding which warning, Tom was within an ace of drifting past the entrance to the lock, in which case assuredly his boat, if not he, had never returned whole. However, the lock-



keeper managed to catch the stern of his skiff with the boat-hook, and drag him back into the proper channel, and then opened the lock-gates for him. Tom congratulated himself as he entered the lock that there were no other boats going through with him; but his evil star was in the ascendant, and all things, animate and inanimate, seemed to be leagued together to humiliate him. As the water began to fall rapidly, he lost his hold of the chain, and the tub instantly drifted across the lock, and was in imminent danger of sticking and breaking her back, when the lock-keeper again came to the rescue with his boat-hook; and, guessing the state of the case, did not quit him until he had safely shoved him and his boat well out into the pool below, with an exhortation to mind and go outside of the barge which was coming up.

Tom started on the latter half of his outward voyage with the sort of look which Cato must have worn when he elected the losing side, and all the gods went over to the winning one. But his previous struggles had not been thrown away, and he managed to keep the right side of the barge, turn the corner without going aground, and zig-zag down Kennington reach, slowly indeed, and with much labor, but at any rate safely. Rejoicing in this feat, he stopped at the island, and recreated himself with a glass of beer, looking now hopefully towards Sandford, which lay within easy distance, now upwards again along the reach which he had just overcome, and solacing himself with the remembrance of a dictum, which he had heard from a great authority, that it was always easier to steer up stream than down, from which he argued that the worst part of his trial trip was now over.

Presently he saw a skiff turn the corner at the top of Kennington reach, and, resolving in his mind to get to Sandford before the new-comer, paid for his beer, and be-

took himself again to his tub. He got pretty well off, and, the island shutting out his unconscious rival from his view, worked away at first under the pleasing delusion that he was holding his own. But he was soon undeceived, for in monstrously short time the pursuing skiff showed round the corner, and bore down on him. He never relaxed his efforts, but could not help watching the enemy as he came up with him hand over hand, and envying the perfect ease with which he seemed to be pulling his long, steady stroke, and the precision with which he steered, scarcely ever casting a look over his shoulder. He was hugging the Berkshire side himself, as the other skiff passed him, and thought he heard the sculler say something about keeping out, and minding the small lasher; but the noise of waters and his own desperate efforts prevented his heeding, or, indeed, hearing the warning plainly. In another minute, however, he heard plainly enough most energetic shouts behind him; and, turning his head over his right shoulder, saw the man who had just passed him backing his skiff rapidly up stream towards him. The next moment he felt the bows of his boat turn suddenly to the left; the old tub grounded for a moment, and then, turning over on her side, shot him out on to the planking of the steep descent into the small lasher. He grasped at the boards, but they were too slippery to hold, and the rush of water was too strong for him, and, rolling him over and over, like a piece of drift-wood, plunged him into the pond below.

After the first moment of astonishment and fright was over, Tom left himself to the stream, holding his breath hard, and paddling gently with his hands, feeling sure that if he could only hold on, he should come to the surface sooner or later; which accordingly happened after a somewhat lengthy submersion.

His first impulse on rising to the surface, after catching his breath, was to strike out for the shore, but, in the act of doing so, he caught sight of the other skiff coming stern foremost down the descent after him, and he trod the water and drew in his breath to watch. Down she came, as straight as an arrow, into the tumult below ; the sculler sitting upright, and holding his sculls steadily in the water. For a moment she seemed to be going under, but righted herself, and glided swiftly into the still water ; and then the sculler cast a hasty and anxious glance round, till his eyes rested on our hero's half-drowned head.

"Oh, there you are!" he said, looking much relieved ; "all right, I hope. Not hurt, eh?"

"No, thankee ; all right, I believe," answered Tom. "What shall I do?"

"Swim ashore ; I'll look after your boat." So Tom took the advice, swam ashore, and there stood dripping and watching the other as he righted the old tub, which was floating quietly bottom upwards, little the worse for the mishap, and no doubt, if boats can wish, earnestly desiring in her wooden mind to be allowed to go quietly to pieces then and there, sooner than be rescued to be again entrusted to the guidance of freshmen.

The tub having been brought to the bank, the stranger started again, and collected the sculls and bottom boards, which were floating about here and there in the pool, and also succeeded in making salvage of Tom's coat, the pockets of which held his watch, purse, and cigar case. These he brought to the bank, and delivering them over, inquired whether there was any thing else to look after.

"Thank you, no ; nothing but my cap. Never mind it. It's luck enough not to have lost the coat," said Tom, holding up the dripping garment to let the water run out of the arms and pocket-holes, and then wringing it as well



as he could. "At any rate," thought he, "I needn't be afraid of its looking too new any more."

The stranger put off again, and made one more round, searching for the cap and any thing else which he might have overlooked, but without success. While he was doing so, Tom had time to look him well over, and see what sort of man had come to his rescue. He hardly knew at the time the full extent of his obligation — at least if this sort of obligation is to be reckoned not so much by the service actually rendered, as by the risk encountered to be able to render it. There were probably not three men in the university who would have dared to shoot the lasher in a skiff in its then state, for it was in those times a really dangerous place; and Tom himself had had an extraordinary escape, for, as Miller, the St. Ambrose coxswain, remarked on hearing the story, "No one who wasn't born to be hung could have rolled down it without knocking his head against something hard, and going down like lead when he got to the bottom."

He was very well satisfied with his inspection. The other man was evidently a year or two older than himself, his figure was more set, and he had stronger whiskers than are generally grown at twenty. He was somewhere about five feet ten in height, very deep-chested, and with long, powerful arms and hands. There was no denying, however, that at the first glance he was an ugly man; he was marked with small-pox, had large features, high cheek-bones, deeply set eyes, and a very long chin; and had got the trick which many underhung men have of compressing the upper lip. Nevertheless, there was that in his face which hit Tom's fancy, and made him anxious to know the other better. He had an instinct that he should get good out of him. So he was very glad when the search was ended, and the stranger came to the bank,

shipped his sculls, and jumped out with the painter of his skiff in his hand, which he proceeded to fasten to an old stump, while he remarked, —

“I’m afraid the cap’s lost.”

“It doesn’t matter the least. Thank you for coming to help me ; it was very kind indeed, and more than I expected. Don’t they say that one Oxford man will never save another from drowning, unless they have been introduced ? ”

“I don’t know,” replied the other ; “are you sure you’re not hurt ? ”

“Yes, quite,” said Tom, foiled in what he considered an artful plan to get the stranger to introduce himself.

“Then we’re very well out of it,” said the other, looking at the steep descent into the lasher, and the rolling, tumbling rush of the water below.

“Indeed we are,” said Tom ; “but how in the world did you manage not to upset ? ”

“I hardly know myself — I have shipped a good deal of water, you see. Perhaps I ought to have jumped out on the bank and come across to you, leaving my skiff in the river ; for if I had upset I couldn’t have helped you much. However, I followed my instinct, which was to come the quickest way. I thought, too, that if I could manage to get down in the boat I should be of more use. I’m very glad I did it,” he added, after a moment’s pause ; “I’m really proud of having come down that place.”

“So aint I,” said Tom with a laugh, in which the other joined.

“But now you’re getting chilled,” and he turned from the lasher and looked at Tom’s chattering jaws.

“Oh, it’s nothing ! I’m used to being wet.”

“But you may just as well be comfortable if you can. Here’s this rough jersey which I use instead of a coat ; pull

off that wet cotton affair and put it on, and then we'll get to work, for we have plenty to do."

After a little persuasion Tom did as he was bid, and got into the great woollen garment, which was very comforting; and then the two set about getting their skiffs back into the main stream. This was comparatively easy as to the lighter skiff, which was soon baled out and hauled by main force on to the bank, carried across and launched again. The tub gave them much more trouble, for she was quite full of water and very heavy; but after twenty minutes or so of hard work, during which the mutual respect of the laborers for the strength and willingness of each other was much increased, she also lay in the main stream, leaking considerably, but otherwise not much the worse for her adventure.

"Now what do you mean to do?" said the stranger. "I don't think you can pull home in her. One doesn't know how much she may be damaged. She may sink in the lock, or play any prank."

"But what am I to do with her?"

"Oh, you can leave her at Sandford and walk up, and send one of Hall's boys for her, or if you like I will tow her up behind my skiff."

"Wont your skiff carry two?"

"Yes; if you like to come I'll take you, but you must sit very quiet."

"Can't we go down to Sandford first and have a glass of ale? What time is it? — the water has stopped my watch."

"A quarter past three. I have about twenty minutes to spare."

"Come along, then," said Tom; "but will you let me pull your skiff down to Sandford? I resolved to pull to Sandford to-day, and don't like to give it up."

"By all means, if you like," said the other with a smile; "jump in, and I'll walk along the bank."

"Thank you," said Tom, hurrying into the skiff, in which he completed the remaining quarter of a mile, while the owner walked by the side, watching him.

They met on the bank at the little inn by Sandford lock, and had a glass of ale, over which Tom confessed that it was the first time he had ever navigated a skiff by himself, and gave a detailed account of his adventures, to the great amusement of his companion. And by the time they rose to go, it was settled, at Tom's earnest request, that he should pull the sound skiff up, while his companion sat in the stern and coached him. The other consented very kindly, merely stipulating that he himself should take the sculls, if it should prove that Tom could not pull them up in time for hall dinner. So they started, and took the tub in tow when they came up to it. Tom got on famously under his new tutor, who taught him to get forward, and open his knees properly, and throw his weight on to the sculls at the beginning of the stroke. He managed even to get into Ifley lock on the way up without fouling the gates, and was then and there complimented on his progress. Whereupon as they sat there, while the lock filled, Tom poured out his thanks to his tutor for his instruction, which had been given so judiciously that, while he was conscious of improving at every stroke, he did not feel that the other was asserting any superiority over him; and so, though he was really much more humble than at the most disastrous period of his downward voyage, instead of being brimful of wrath and indignation, was getting into a better temper every minute.

It is a great pity that some of our instructors in more important matters than sculling will not take a leaf out of the same book. Of course, it is more satisfactory to



one's own self-love, to make every one who comes to one to learn, feel that he is a fool, and we wise men: but, if our object is to teach well and usefully what we know ourselves, there cannot be a worse method. I suppose that no man is likely to adopt it, so long as he is conscious that he has any thing himself to learn from his pupils; and as soon as he has arrived at the conviction that they can teach him nothing — that it is henceforth to be all give and no take — the sooner he throws up his office of teacher, the better it will be for himself, his pupils, and his country, whose sons he is misguiding.

On their way up, so intent were they on their own work, that it was not until shouts of "Halloo, Brown! how did you get there? Why, you said you were not going down to-day," greeted them just above the Gut, that they were aware of the presence of the freshmen's four-oar of St. Ambrose College, which had with some trouble succeeded in overtaking them.

"I said I wasn't going down with *you*," shouted Tom, grinding away harder than ever, that they might witness and wonder at his prowess.

"Oh, I dare say! Whose skiff are you towing up? I believe you've been upset."

Tom made no reply, and the four-oar floundered on ahead.

"Are you at St. Ambrose's?" asked his sitter, after a minute.

"Yes; that's my treadmill, that four-oar. I've been down in it almost every day since I came up, and very poor fun it is. So I thought to-day I would go on my own hook, and see if I couldn't make a better hand of it. And I have, too, I know, thanks to you." \*

The other made no remark, but a little shade came over his face. He had had no chance of making out

Tom's college, as the new cap which would have betrayed him had disappeared in the lasher. He himself wore a glazed straw hat, which was of no college; so that up to this time neither of them had known to what college the other belonged.

When they landed at Hall's, Tom was at once involved in a wrangle with the manager as to the amount of damage done to the tub; which the latter refused to assess before he knew what had happened to it; while our hero vigorously and with reason maintained, that if he knew his business it could not matter what had happened to the boat. There she was, and he must say whether she was better or worse, or how much worse than when she started. In the middle of which dialogue his new acquaintance, touching his arm, said, "You can leave my jersey with your own things; I shall get it to-morrow," and then disappeared.

Tom, when he had come to terms with his adversary, ran up-stairs, expecting to find the other, and meaning to tell his name, and find out who it was that had played the good Samaritan by him. He was much annoyed when he found the coast clear, and dressed in a grumbling humor. "I wonder why he should have gone off so quick. He might just as well have stayed and walked up with me," thought he. "Let me see, though; didn't he say I was to leave his jersey in our room, with my own things? Why, perhaps he is a St. Ambrose man himself. But then he would have told me so, surely. I don't remember to have seen his face in chapel or hall; but then there are such a lot of new faces, and he may not sit near me. However, I mean to find him out before long, whoever he may be." With which resolve Tom crossed in the punt into Christ's Church meadow, and strolled college-wards, feeling that he had had a good hard afternoon's exercise, and was

much the better for it. He might have satisfied his curiosity at once by simply asking the manager who it was that had arrived with him; and this occurred to him before he got home, whereat he felt satisfied; but would not go back then, as it was so near hall time. He would be sure to remember it the first thing to-morrow.

As it happened, however, he had not so long to wait for the information which he needed; for scarcely had he sat down in hall and ordered his dinner, when he caught sight of his boating acquaintance, who walked in habited in a gown which Tom took for a scholar's. He took his seat at a little table in the middle of the hall, near the bachelors' table, but quite away from the rest of the undergraduates, at which sat four or five other men in similar gowns. He either did not or would not notice the looks of recognition which Tom kept firing at him until he had taken his seat.

"Who is that man that has just come in, do you know?" said Tom to his next neighbor, a second-term man.

"Which?" said the other, looking up.

"That one over at the little table in the middle of the hall, with the dark whiskers. There, he has just turned rather from us, and put his arm on the table."

"Oh, his name is Hardy."

"Do you know him?"

"No; I don't think anybody does. They say he is a clever fellow, but a very queer one."

"Why does he sit at that table?"

"He is one of our servitors," said the other; "they all sit there together."

"Oh," said Tom, not much the wiser for the information, but resolved to waylay Hardy as soon as hall was over, and highly delighted to find that they were after all

of the same college; for he had already begun to find out, that however friendly you may be with out-college men, you must live chiefly with those of your own. But now his scout brought his dinner, and he fell to with marvellous appetite on his ample commons.



## CHAPTER III.

### A BREAKFAST AT DRYSDALE'S.

No man in St. Ambrose College gave such breakfasts as Drysdale. I don't mean the great heavy spreads for thirty or forty, which came once or twice a term, when every thing was supplied out of the college kitchen, and you had to ask leave of the dean before you could have it at all. In those ponderous feasts the most humdrum of undergraduate-kind might rival the most artistic, if he could only pay his battel-bill, or get credit with the cook. But the daily morning meal, when even gentlemen-commoners were limited to two hot dishes out of the kitchen, this was Drysdale's forte. Ordinary men left the matter in the hands of scouts, and were content with the ever-recurring buttered toast and eggs, with a dish of broiled ham, or something of the sort, and marmalade and bitter ale to finish with; but Drysdale was not an ordinary man, as you felt in a moment when you went to breakfast with him for the first time.

The staircase on which he lived was inhabited, except in the garrets, by men in the fast set, and he and three others, who had an equal aversion to solitary feeding, had established a breakfast-club, in which, thanks to Drysdale's genius, real scientific gastronomy was cultivated. Every morning the boy from the Weirs arrived with freshly caught gudgeon, and now and then an eel or trout, which the scouts on the staircase had learnt to fry delicately in oil. Fresh watercresses came in the same

basket, and the college kitchen furnished a spithecocked chicken, or grilled turkey's leg. In the season there were plover's eggs; or, at the worst, there was a dainty omelette; and a distant baker, famed for his light rolls and high charges, sent in the bread—the common domestic college loaf being of course out of the question for any one with the slightest pretensions to taste, and becoming the perquisite of the scouts. Then there would be a deep Yorkshire pie, or reservoir of potted game, as a *pièce de résistance*, and three or four sorts of preserves; and a large cool tankard of cider or ale-cup to finish up with, or soda-water and maraschino for a change. Tea and coffee were there indeed, but merely as a compliment to those respectable beverages, for they were rarely touched by the breakfast-eaters of No. 3 staircase. Pleasant young gentlemen were on No. 3 staircase; I mean the ground and first-floor men who formed the breakfast-club, for the garrets were nobodies. Three out of the four were gentlemen-commoners, with allowances of £500 a year at least each; and, as they treated their allowances as pocket-money only, and went tick for every thing which the wide range of Oxford tradesmen would book, and as they were all in their first year, ready money was plenty and credit good; and they might have had potted hippopotamus for breakfast if they had chosen to order it, which I verily believe they would have done if they had thought of it.

Two out of the three were sons of rich men who had made their own fortunes, and sent their sons to St. Ambrose's because it was very desirable that the young gentlemen should make good connections. In fact, the fathers looked upon the university as a good investment, and gloried much in hearing their sons talk familiarly in the vacations of their dear friends Lord Harry This and Sir George That.

Drysdale, the third of the set, was the heir of an old as well as of a rich family, and consequently, having his connection ready made to his hand, cared little enough whom he associated with, provided they were pleasant fellows, and gave him good food and wines. His whole idea at present was to enjoy himself as much as possible; but he had good manly stuff in him at the bottom, and, had he fallen into any but the fast set, would have made a fine fellow, and done credit to himself and his college.

The fourth man of the breakfast-club, the Hon. Piers St. Cloud, was in his third year, and was a very well-dressed, well-mannered, and well-connected young man. His family was poor, and his allowance small, but he never wanted for any thing. He didn't entertain much, certainly, but when he did, every thing was in the best possible style. He was very exclusive, and knew no man in college out of the fast set; and of these he addicted himself chiefly to the society of the rich freshmen, for somehow the men of his own standing seemed a little shy of him. But with the freshmen he was always hand and glove, lived in their rooms, and used their wines, horses, and other movable property as his own; and, being a good whist and billiard player, and not a bad jockey, managed in one way or another to make his young friends pay well for the honor of his acquaintance; as, indeed, why should they not, at least those of them who came to college to form eligible connections? for had not his remote lineal ancestor come over in the same ship with William the Conqueror? were not all his relations about the Court, as lords and ladies in waiting, white sticks or black rods, and in the innermost of all possible circles of the great world? and was there a better coat of arms than he bore in all Burke's Peerage?

Our hero had met Drysdale at a house in the country

shortly before the beginning of his first term, and they had rather taken to one another ; so as soon as Tom came up, Drysdale had left his pasteboard ; and, as he came out of chapel one morning shortly after his arrival, Drysdale's scout came up to him with an invitation to breakfast. So he went to his own rooms, ordered his commons to be taken across to No. 3, and followed himself a few minutes afterwards. No one was in the rooms when he arrived, for none of the club had finished their toilettes. Morning chapel was not meant for, or cultivated by, gentlemen-commoners ; they paid double chapel fees, in consideration of which, I suppose, they were not expected to attend so often as the rest of the undergraduates ; at any rate, they didn't, and no harm came to them in consequence of their absence. As Tom entered, a great splashing in an inner room stopped for a moment, and Drysdale's voice shouted out that he was in his tub, but would be with him in a minute. So Tom gave himself up to the contemplation of the rooms in which his unfortunate acquaintance dwelt ; and very pleasant rooms they were. The large room, in which the breakfast-table was laid for five, was lofty and well proportioned, and panelled with old oak, and the furniture was handsome and solid, and in keeping with the room.

There were four deep windows, high up in the wall, with cushioned seats under them, two looking into the large quadrangle, and two into the inner one. Outside these windows, Drysdale had rigged up hanging gardens, which were kept full of flowers by the first nursery-man in Oxford all the year round ; so that even on this February morning, the scent of gardenia and violets pervaded the room, and strove for mastery with the smell of stale tobacco which hung about the curtains and sofas. There was a large glass in an oak frame over the mantelpiece,



which was loaded with choice pipes and cigar-cases, and quaint receptacles for tobacco; and by the side of the glass hung small carved oak frames, containing lists of the meets of the Heythrop, the Old Berkshire, and Drake's hounds, for the current week. There was a queer assortment of well-framed paintings and engravings on the walls; some of considerable merit, especially some water-color sea-pieces and engravings from Landseer's pictures, mingled with which hung Taglioni and Cerito, in short petticoats and impossible attitudes; Phosphorus winning the Derby; the Death of Grimaldi (the famous steeple-chase horse — not poor old Joe); an American Trotting Match, and Jem Belcher and Deaf Burke in attitudes of self-defence. Several tandem and riding whips, mounted in heavy silver, and a double-barrelled gun, and fishing rods, occupied one corner, and a polished copper cask, holding about five gallons of mild ale, stood in another. In short, there was plenty of every thing except books — the literature of the world being represented, so far as Tom could make out in his short scrutiny, by a few well-bound but badly used volumes of classics, with the cribs thereto appertaining, shoved away into a cupboard which stood half open, and contained, besides, half-emptied decanters, and large pewters, and dog-collars, and packs of cards, and all sorts of miscellaneous articles to serve as an antidote.

Tom had scarcely finished his short survey, when the door of the bedroom opened, and Drysdale emerged in a loose jacket lined with silk, his velvet cap on his head, and otherwise gorgeously attired. He was a pleasant-looking fellow, of middle size, with dark hair, and a merry brown eye, with a twinkle in it which spoke well for his sense of humor; otherwise, his features were rather plain, but he had the look and manners of a thoroughly well-bred gentleman.



His first act, after nodding to Tom, was to seize on a pewter and resort to the cask in the corner, from whence he drew a pint or so of the contents, having, as he said, “ ‘a whoreson longing for that poor creature, small beer.’ We were playing Van-John in Blake’s rooms till three last night, and he gave us devilled bones and mulled port. A fellow can’t enjoy his breakfast after that without something to cool his coppers.”

Tom was as yet ignorant of what Van-John might be, so held his peace, and took a pull at the beer which the other handed him ; and then the scout entered, and received orders to bring up Jack and the breakfast, and not to wait for any one. In another minute, a bouncing and scrattling was heard on the stairs, and a white bull-dog rushed in, a gem in his way ; for his brow was broad and massive, and wrinkled about the eyes ; his skin was as fine as a lady’s, and his tail taper and nearly as thin as a clay pipe ; but he had a way of going snuzzling about the calves of strangers which was not pleasant for nervous people. Tom, however, was used to dogs, and soon became friends with him, which evidently pleased his host. And then the breakfast arrived, all smoking, and with it the two other ingenious youths, in velvet caps and far more gorgeous apparel, so far as colors went, than Drysdale. They were introduced to Tom, who thought them somewhat ordinary and rather loud young gentlemen. One of them remonstrated vigorously against the presence of that confounded dog, and so Jack was sent to lie down in a corner, and then the four fell to work upon the breakfast.

It was a good lesson in gastronomy, but the results are scarcely worth repeating here. It is wonderful, though, how you feel drawn to a man who feeds you well ; and, as Tom’s appetite got less, his liking and respect for his host undoubtedly increased.

When they had nearly finished, in walked the Honorable Piers, a tall, slight man, two or three years older than the rest of them ; good-looking, and very well and quietly dressed, but with a drawing up of his nostril, and a drawing down of the corners of his mouth, which set Tom against him at once. The cool, supercilious half-nod, moreover, to which he treated our hero when introduced to him, was enough to spoil his digestion, and hurt his self-love a good deal more than he would have liked to own.

"Here, Henry," said the Honorable Piers to the scout in attendance, seating himself, and inspecting the half-cleared dishes ; "what is there for my breakfast ?"

Henry bustled about, and handed a dish or two.

"I don't want these cold things ; haven't you kept me any gudgeon ?"

"Why, sir," said Henry, "there was only two dozen this morning, and Mr. Drysdale told me to cook them all."

"To be sure I did," said Drysdale. "Just half a dozen for each of us four : they were firstrate. If you can't get here at half-past nine, you wont get gudgeon, I can tell you."

"Just go and get me a broil from the kitchen," said the Honorable Piers, without deigning an answer to Drysdale.

"Very sorry, sir ; kitchen's shut by now, sir," answered Henry.

"Then go to Hinton's, and order some cutlets."

"I say, Henry," shouted Drysdale to the retreating scout ; "not to my tick, mind ! Put them down to Mr. St. Cloud."

Henry seemed to know very well that in that case he might save himself the trouble of the journey, and consequently returned to his waiting ; and the Honorable Piers set to work upon his breakfast, without showing any

further ill-temper certainly, except by the stinging things which he threw every now and then into the conversation, for the benefit of each of the others in turn.

Tom thought he detected signs of coming hostilities between his host and St. Cloud, for Drysdale seemed to prick up his ears and get combative whenever the other spoke, and lost no chance of roughing him in his replies. And, indeed, he wasn't far wrong; the fact being, that during Drysdale's first term, the other had lived on him—drinking his wine, smoking his cigars, driving his dog-cart, and winning his money; all which Drysdale, who was the easiest-going and best-tempered fellow in Oxford, would have stood without turning a hair: but St. Cloud added to these little favors a half-patronizing, half-contemptuous manner, which he used with great success towards some of the other gentlemen-commoners, who thought it a mark of high breeding, and the correct thing, but which Drysdale, who didn't care three straws about knowing St. Cloud, wasn't going to put up with.

However, nothing happened beyond a little sparring, and the breakfast things were cleared away, and the tankards left on the table, and the company betook themselves to cigars and easy chairs; Jack coming out of his corner to be gratified with some of the remnants by his fond master, and then curling himself up on the sofa along which Drysdale lounged.

“What are you going to do to-day, Drysdale?” said one of the others. “I've ordered a leader sent on over the bridge, and mean to drive my dog-cart over, and dine at Abingdon. Wont you come?”

“Who's going besides?” asked Drysdale.

“Oh, only St. Cloud and Farley here. There's lots of room for a fourth.”

"No, thank'ee ; teaming's slow work on the back seat ; besides, I've half promised to go down in the boat."

"In the boat !" shouted the other. "Why you don't mean to say you're going to take to pulling ?"

"Well, I don't know ; I rather think I am. I'm dog-tired of driving and doing the High Street, and playing cards and billiards all day, and our boat is likely to be head of the river, I think."

"By Jove ! I should as soon have thought of your taking to reading, or going to University Sermon," put in St. Cloud.

"And the boating-men, too," went on Farley ; "did you ever see such a set, St. Cloud ? with their everlasting flannels and jerseys, and hair cropped like prize-fighters."

"I'll bet a guinea there isn't one of them has more than £200 a-year," put in Chanter, whose father could just write his name, and was making a colossal fortune by supplying bad iron rails to the new railway companies.

"What the Devil do I care," broke in Drysdale ; "I know they're a deal more amusing than you fellows, who can do nothing that don't cost pounds."

"Getting economical !" sneered St. Cloud.

"Well, I don't see the fun of tearing one's heart out, and blistering one's hands, only to get abused by that little brute, Miller the coxswain," said Farley.

"Why you wont be able to sit straight in your chair for a month," said Chanter ; "and the captain will make you dine at one, and fetch you out of anybody's rooms, confound his impudence, whether he knows them or not, at eleven o'clock every night."

"Two cigars a day, and a pint and a half of liquid," and Farley inserted his cod-fish face into the tankard ; "fancy Drysdale on training allowance !"



Here a new-comer entered in a bachelor's gown, who was warmly greeted by the name of Sanders, by Drysdale. St. Cloud and he exchanged the coldest possible nods; and the other two, taking the office from their mentor, stared at him through their smoke, and, after a minute or two's silence, and a few rude, half-whispered remarks amongst themselves, went off to play a game at pyramids till luncheon time. Sanders took a cigar which Drysdale offered, and began asking him about his friends at home, and what he had been doing in the vacation.

They were evidently intimate, though Tom thought that Drysdale didn't seem quite at his ease at first, which he wondered at, as Sanders took his fancy at once. However, eleven o'clock struck, and Tom had to go off to lecture, where we cannot follow him just now, but must remain with Drysdale and Sanders, who chatted on very pleasantly for some twenty minutes, till a knock came at the door. It was not till the third summons that Drysdale shouted "Come in," with a shrug of his shoulders, and an impatient kick at the sofa cushion at his feet, as though he were not half pleased at the approaching visit.

Reader! had you not ever a friend a few years older than yourself, whose good opinion you were anxious to keep? A fellow *teres atque rotundus*; who could do every thing better than you, from Plato and tennis down to singing a comic song and playing quoits? If you have had, wasn't he always in your rooms or company whenever any thing happened to show your little weak points? Sanders, at any rate, occupied this position towards our young friend Drysdale, and the latter, much as he liked Sanders' company, would have preferred it at any other time than on an idle morning, just at the beginning of term, when the gentlemen tradesmen, who look upon undergraduates



in general, and gentlemen-commoners in particular, as their lawful prey, are in the habit of calling in flocks.

The new arrival was a tall, florid man, with a half-servile, half-impudent manner, and a foreign accent ; dressed in sumptuous costume, with a velvet-faced coat, and a gorgeous plush waistcoat. Under his arm he carried a large parcel, which he proceeded to open, and placed upon a sofa the contents, consisting of a couple of coats, and three or four waistcoats and pairs of trousers. He saluted Sanders with a most obsequious bow, looked nervously at Jack, who opened one eye from between his master's legs and growled, and then, turning to Drysdale, asked if he should have the honor of seeing him try on any of the clothes ?

"No ; I can't be bored with trying them on now," said Drysdale ; "leave them where they are."

Mr. Schloss would like very much on his return to town, in a day or two, to be able to assure his principals, that Mr. Drysdale's orders had been executed to his satisfaction. He had also some very beautiful new stuffs with him which he should like to submit to Mr. Drysdale ; and without more ado began unfolding cards of the most fabulous plushes and cloths.

Drysdale glanced first at the cards and then at Sanders, who sat puffing his cigar, and watching Schloss' proceedings with a look not unlike Jack's, when any one he did not approve of approached his master.

"Confound your patterns, Schloss," said Drysdale ; "I tell you I've more things than I want already."

"The large stripe, such as these, is now very much worn for trousers in London," went on Schloss, without heeding the rebuff, and spreading his cards on the table.

"D—— trousers," replied Drysdale; "you seem to think, Schloss, that a fellow has ten pairs of legs."

"Monsieur is pleased to joke," smiled Schloss; "but, to be in the mode, gentlemen must have variety."

"Well, I wont order any now, that's flat," said Drysdale.

"Monsieur will do as he pleases; but it is impossible that he should not have some plush waistcoats; the fabric is only just out, and is making a sensation."

"Now look here, Schloss; will you go if I order a waistcoat?"

"Monsieur is very good; he sees how tasteful these new patterns are."

"I wouldn't be seen at a cock-fight in one of them; they're as gaudy as a salmon-fly," said Drysdale, feeling the stuff which the obsequious Schloss held out. "But it seems nice stuff, too," he went on; "I shouldn't mind having a couple of waistcoats of it of this pattern;" and he chucked across to Schloss a dark tartan waistcoat which was lying near him. "Have you got the stuff in that pattern?"

"Ah! no," said Schloss, gathering up the waistcoat; "but it shall not hinder. I shall have at once a loom for monsieur set up in Paris."

"Set it up at Jericho if you like," said Drysdale; "and now go!"

"May I ask, Mr. Schloss," broke in Sanders, "what it will cost to set up the loom?"

"Ah! indeed, a trifle only; some twelve or perhaps fourteen pounds." Sanders gave a chuckle, and puffed away at his cigar.

"By Jove," shouted Drysdale, jerking himself into a sitting posture, and upsetting Jack, who went trotting

about the room, and snuffing at Schloss' legs; "do you mean, to say, Schloss, you were going to make me waistcoats at fourteen guineas apiece?"

"Not if monsieur disapproves. Ah! the large hound is not friendly to strangers; I will call again when monsieur is more at leisure." And Schloss gathered up his cards and beat a hasty retreat, followed by Jack with his head on one side, and casting an enraged look at Sanders, as he slid through the door.

"Well done, Jack, old boy!" said Sanders, patting him; "what a funk the fellow was in. Well, you've saved your master a pony this fine morning. Cheap dog you've got, Drysdale."

"D—— the fellow," answered Drysdale, "he leaves a bad taste in one's mouth;" and he went to the table, took a pull at the tankard, and then threw himself down on the sofa again, and Jack jumped up and coiled himself round by his master's legs, keeping one half-open eye winking at him, and giving an occasional wag with the end of his taper tail.

Sanders got up, and began handling the new things. First he held up a pair of bright blue trousers, with a red stripe across them, Drysdale looking on from the sofa. "I say, Drysdale, you don't mean to say you really ordered these thunder-and-lightning affairs?"

"Heaven only knows," said Drysdale; "I dare say I did. I'd order a full suit cut out of my grandmother's farthingale to get that cursed Schloss out of my rooms sometimes."

"You'll never be able to wear them; even in Oxford the boys would mob you. Why don't you kick him down-stairs?" suggested Sanders, putting down the trousers, and turning to Drysdale.

"Well, I've been very near it once or twice; but, I don't know — my name's Easy — besides, I don't want to give up the beast altogether; he makes the best trousers in England."

"And these waistcoats," went on Sanders; "let me see; three light silk waistcoats, peach-color, fawn-color, and lavender. Well, of course, you can only wear these at your weddings. You may be married the first time in the peach or fawn-color; and then, if you've luck, and bury your first wife soon, it will be a delicate compliment to take to No. 2 in the lavender, that being half-mourning; but still, you see, we're in difficulty as to one of the three, either the peach or the fawn-color —"

Here he was interrupted by another knock, and a boy entered from the fashionable tobacconist's in Oriel Lane, who had general orders to let Drysdale have his fair share of any thing very special in the cigar line. He deposited a two-pound box of cigars at three guineas the pound on the table, and withdrew in silence.

Then came a bootmaker with a new pair of top-boots, which Drysdale had ordered in November, and had forgotten next day. This artist, wisely considering that his young patron must have plenty of tops to last him through the hunting season (he himself having supplied three previous pairs in October), had retained the present pair for show in his window; and every one knows that boots wear much better for being kept some time before use. Now, however, as the hunting season was drawing to a close, and the place in the window was wanted for spring stock, he judiciously sent in the tops, merely adding half a sovereign or so to the price for interest on his outlay since the order. He also kindly left on the table a pair of large plated spurs to match the boots.



It never rains but it pours. Sanders sat smoking his cigar in provoking silence, while knock succeeded knock, and tradesman followed tradesman; each depositing some article ordered, or supposed to have been ordered, or which ought in the judgment of the depositors to have been ordered, by the luckless Drysdale; and new hats and ties and gloves and pins jostled balsam of Neroli and registered shaving-soap and fancy letter-paper and eau de Cologne, on every available table. A visit from two livery-stable-keepers in succession followed, each of whom had several new leaders which they were anxious Mr. Drysdale should try as soon as possible. Drysdale growled and grunted, and wished them or Sanders at the bottom of the sea; however, he consoled himself with the thought that the worst was now past,—there was no other possible supplier of undergraduate wants who could arrive.

Not so; in another minute a gentle knock came at the door; Jack pricked up his ears and wagged his tail; Drysdale recklessly shouted, "Come in!" and the door slowly opened about eighteen inches, and a shock head of hair entered the room, from which one lively little gimlet eye went glancing about into every corner; the other eye was closed, but whether as a perpetual wink to indicate the unsleeping weariness of the owner, or because that hero had really lost the power of using it in some of his numerous encounters with men and beasts, no one, so far as I know, has ever ascertained.

"Ah! Mr. Drysdale, sir!" began the head; and then rapidly withdrew behind the door, to avoid one of the spurs, which (being the missile nearest at hand) Drysdale instantly discharged at it. As the spur fell to the floor, the head re-appeared in the room, and as quickly disappeared again, in deference to the other spur, the top



boots, an ivory-handled hair-brush, and a translation of Euripedes, which in turn saluted each successive appearance of said head ; and the grin was broader on each re-appearance.

Then Drysdale, having no other article within reach which he could throw, burst into a loud fit of laughter, in which Sanders and the head heartily joined, and shouted, "Come in, Joe, you old fool ! and don't stand bobbing your ugly old mug in and out there, like a jack in the box."

So the head came in, and after it the body, and closed the door behind it ; and a queer, cross-grained, tough-looking body it was, of about fifty years' standing, or rather slouching, clothed in old fustian coat, and corduroy breeches and gaiters, and being the earthly tabernacle of Joe Muggles, the dog-fancier of St. Aldate's.

"How the deuce did you get by the lodge, Joe?" inquired Drysdale. Joe, be it known, had been forbidden the college for importing a sack of rats into the inner quadrangle, upon the turf of which a match at rat-killing had come off between the terriers of two gentlemen-commoners. This little event might have passed unnoticed, but that Drysdale had bought from Joe a dozen of the slaughtered rats, and nailed them on the doors of the four college tutors, three to a door ; whereupon inquiry had been made, and Joe had been outlawed.

"Oh, please, Mr. Drysdale, sir, I just watched the 'ed porter, sir, across to the buttery to get his mornin', and then I tips the wink to the under-porter (pal o' mine, sir, the under-porter) and makes a run of it right up."

"Well, you'll be quod'ed if you're caught ! Now, what do you want ?"

"Why, you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," said Joe, in his most

insinuating tone, "my mate hev' got a old dog brock, sir, from the Heythrop kennel, and Honble Wernham, sir, of New Inn 'All, sir, he've jist been down our yard with a fighting chap from town, Mr. Drysdale — in the fancy, sir, he is, and hev' got a matter of three dogs down wi' un, stoppin' at Milky Bill's. And he says, says he, Mr. Drysdale, as arra one of he's dogs 'll draw the old un three times, while arra Oxford dog 'll draw un twice, and Honble Wernham chaffs as how he'll back un for a fi'pun note;" — and Joe stopped to caress Jack, who was fawning on him as if he understood every word.

"Well, Joe, what then?" said Drysdale.

"So you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," went on Joe, fondling Jack's muzzle, "my mate says, says he, 'Jack's the dog as can draw a brock,' says he, 'agin any Lunnun dog as ever was whelped; and Mr. Drysdale,' says he, 'aint the man as 'd see two poor chaps bounced out of their honest name by arra town chap, and a fi'pun note's no more to he, for the matter o' that, than to Honble Wernham his self,' says my mate."

"So I'm to lend you Jack for a match, and stand the stakes?"

"Well, Mr. Drysdale, sir, that was what my mate was a sayin'."

"You're cool hands, you and your mate," said Drysdale; "here, take a drink, and get out, and I'll think about it." Drysdale was now in a defiant humor, and resolved not to let Sanders think that his presence could keep him from any act of folly which he was minded to.

Joe took his drink; and just then several men came in from lecture, and drew off Drysdale's attention from Jack, who quietly followed Joe out of the room, when that worthy disappeared. Drysdale only laughed when he

found it out, and went down to the yard that afternoon to see the match between the London dog and his own pet.

“How in the world are youngsters with unlimited credit, plenty of ready money, and fast tastes, to be kept from making fools and blackguards of themselves up here?” thought Sanders as he strolled back to his college. And it is a question which has exercised other heads besides his, and probably is a long way yet from being well solved.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ST. AMBROSE BOAT-CLUB: ITS MINISTRY AND THEIR BUDGET.

WE left our hero, a short time back, busily engaged on his dinner commons, and resolved forthwith to make great friends with Hardy. It never occurred to him that there could be the slightest difficulty in carrying out this resolve. After such a passage as they two had had together that afternoon, he felt that the usual outworks of acquaintanceship had been cleared at a bound, and looked upon Hardy already as an old friend to whom he could talk out his mind as freely as he had been used to do to his old tutor at school, or to Arthur. Moreover, as there were already several things in his head which he was anxious to ventilate, he was all the more pleased that chance had thrown him across a man of so much older standing than himself, and one to whom he instinctively felt that he could look up.

Accordingly, after grace had been said, and he saw that Hardy had not finished his dinner, but sat down again when the fellows had left the hall, he strolled out, meaning to wait for his victim outside, and seize upon him then and there; so he stopped on the steps outside the hall-door; and, to pass the time, joined himself to one or two other men with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, who were also hanging about. While they were talking, Hardy came out of hall, and Tom turned and stepped forward, meaning to speak to him; when, to his utter dis-

comfiture, the other walked quickly away, looking straight before him, and without showing, by look or gesture, that he was conscious of our hero's existence, or had ever seen him before in his life.

Tom was so taken aback that he made no effort to follow. He just glanced at his companions to see whether they had noticed the occurrence, and was glad to see that they had not (being deep in the discussion of the merits of a new hunter of Simmon's, which one of them had been riding); so he walked away by himself to consider what it could mean. But the more he puzzled about it, the less could he understand it. Surely, he thought, Hardy must have seen me; and yet, if he had, why did he not recognize me? My cap and gown can't be such a disguise as all that. But common decency must have led him to ask whether I was any the worse for my ducking, if he knew me.

He scouted the notion, which suggested itself once or twice, that Hardy meant to cut him; and so, not being able to come to any reasonable conclusion, suddenly bethought him that he was asked to a wine party; and, putting his speculations aside for the moment, with the full intention nevertheless of clearing up the mystery as soon as possible, he betook himself to the rooms of his entertainer.

They were fair-sized rooms in the second quadrangle, furnished plainly but well, so far as Tom could judge; but as they were now laid out for the wine party, they had lost all individual character for the time. Every one of us, I suppose, is fond of studying the rooms, chambers, dens in short, of whatever sort they may be, of our friends and acquaintance — at least, I know that I myself like to see what sort of a chair a man sits in, where he puts it, what books lie or stand on the shelves nearest his hand, what



the objects are which he keeps most familiarly before him, in that particular nook of the earth's surface in which he is most at home, where he pulls off his coat, collar, and boots, and gets into an old easy shooting-jacket, and his broadest slippers. Fine houses and fine rooms have no attraction whatever, I should think, for most men, and those who have the finest drawing-rooms are probably the most bored by them; but the den of a man you like, or are disposed to like, has the strongest and strangest attraction for you. However, as I was saying, an Oxford undergraduate's room, set out for a wine party, can tell you nothing. All the characteristics are shoved away into the background, and there is nothing to be seen but a long mahogany set out with bottles, glasses, and dessert. In the present instance the preparations for festivity were pretty much what they ought to be: good sound port and sherry, biscuits, and a plate or two of nuts and dried fruits. The host, who sat at the head of the board, was one of the mainstays of the college boat-club. He was treasurer of the club, and also a sort of boating-nurse, who looked up and trained the young oars, and in this capacity had been in command of the freshmen's four-oar, in which Tom had been learning his rudiments. He was a heavy, burly man, naturally awkward in his movements, but gifted with a sort of steady, dogged enthusiasm, and by dint of hard and constant training had made himself into a most useful oar, fit for any place in the middle of the boat. In the two years of his residence he had pulled down to Sandford every day except Sundays, and much further whenever he could get anybody to accompany him. He was the most good-natured man in the world, very badly dressed, very short-sighted, and called everybody "old fellow." His name was simple Smith, generally known as Diogenes Smith, from an eccentric habit

which he had of making an easy-chair of his hip-bath. Malicious acquaintance declared that when Smith first came up, and, having paid the valuation for the furniture in his rooms, came to inspect the same, the tub in question had been left by chance in the sitting-room, and that Smith, not having the faintest idea of its proper use, had by the exercise of his natural reason come to the conclusion that it could only be meant for a man to sit in, and so had kept it in his sitting-room, and taken to it as an arm-chair. This I have reason to believe was a libel. Certain it is, however, that in his first term he was discovered sitting solemnly in his tub, by his fireside, with his spectacles on, playing the flute — the only other recreation besides boating in which he indulged; and no amount of quizzing could get him out of the habit. When alone, or with only one or two friends in his room, he still occupied the tub; and declared that it was the most perfect of seats hitherto invented, and, above all, adapted for the recreation of a boating-man, to whom cushioned seats should be an abomination. He was naturally a very hospitable man, and on this night was particularly anxious to make his rooms pleasant to all comers, as it was a sort of opening of the boating season. This wine of his was a business matter, in fact, to which Diogenes had invited officially, as treasurer of the boat-club, every man who had ever shown the least tendency to pulling, — many with whom he had scarcely a nodding acquaintance. For Miller, the coxswain, had come up at last. He had taken his B.A. degree in the Michaelmas term, and been very near starting for a tour in the East. Upon turning the matter over in his mind, however, Miller had come to the conclusion that Palestine, and Egypt, and Greece could not run away, but that, unless he was there to keep matters going, the St. Ambrose boat would lose the best chance it was ever

likely to have of getting to the head of the river; so he had patriotically resolved to reside till June, read divinity, and coach the racing crew; and had written to Diogenes to call together the whole boating interest of the college, that they might set to work at once in good earnest. Tom, and the three or four other freshmen present, were duly presented to Miller as they came in, who looked them over as the colonel of a crack regiment might look over horses at Horncastle-fair, with a single eye to their bone and muscle, and how much work might be got out of them. They then gathered towards the lower end of the long table, and surveyed the celebrities at the upper end with much respect. Miller, the coxswain, sat on the host's right hand, — a slight, resolute, fiery little man, with curly black hair. He was peculiarly qualified by nature for the task which he had set himself; and it takes no mean qualities to keep a boat's crew well together and in order. Perhaps he erred a little on the side of over-strictness and severity; and he certainly would have been more popular had his manner been a thought more courteous; but the men who rebelled most against his tyranny grumblingly confessed that he was a first-rate coxswain.

A very different man was the captain of the boat, who sat opposite to Miller; altogether a noble specimen of a very noble type of our countrymen. Tall and strong of body; courageous and even-tempered; tolerant of all men; sparing of speech, but ready in action; a thoroughly well-balanced, modest, quiet Englishman; — one of those who do a good stroke of the work of the country without getting much credit for it, or ever becoming aware of the fact; for the last thing such men understand is how to blow their own trumpets. He was perhaps too easy for the captain of St. Ambrose's boat-club; at any rate, Miller was always telling him so; but, if he were not strict

enough with others, he never spared himself, and was as good as three men in the boat at a pinch.

But if I venture on more introductions, my readers will get bewildered ; so I must close the list, much as I should like to make them known to "fortis Gyas fortisque Cloarthus," who sat round the chiefs, laughing and consulting, and speculating on the chances of the coming races. No ; stay, there is one other man they must make room for. Here he comes, rather late, in a very glossy hat, the only man in the room not in cap and gown. He walks up and takes his place by the side of the host as a matter of course ; a handsome, pale man, with a dark, quick eye, conscious that he draws attention wherever he goes, and apparently of opinion that it is his right.

"Who is that who has just come in in beaver?" said Tom, touching the man next to him.

"Oh ! don't you know ? that's Blake ; he's the most wonderful fellow in Oxford," answered his neighbor.

"How do you mean ?" said Tom.

"Why, he can do every thing better than almost anybody, and without any trouble at all. Miller was obliged to have him in the boat last year, though he never trained a bit. Then he's in the eleven, and is a wonderful rider, and tennis-player, and shot."

"Ay, and he's so awfully clever with it all," joined in the man on the other side. "He'll be a safe first, though I don't believe he reads more than you or I. He can write songs, too, as fast as you can talk nearly, and sings them wonderfully."

"Is he of our college, then ?"

"Yes, of course, or he couldn't have been in our boat last year."

"But I don't think I ever saw him in chapel or hall."

"No ; I dare say not. He hardly ever goes to either,



and yet he manages never to get hauled up much, no one knows how. He never gets up now till the afternoon, and sits up nearly all night playing cards with the fastest fellows, or going round singing glees at three or four in the morning."

Tom sipped his port and looked with great interest at the admirable Crichton of St. Ambrose's; and, after watching him a few minutes, said in a low voice to his neighbor, —

"How wretched he looks; I never saw a sadder face."

"Poor Blake! one can't help calling him 'poor,' although he himself would have winced at it more than at any other name you could have called him. You might have admired, feared, or wondered at him, and he would have been pleased; the object of his life was to raise such feelings in his neighbors; but pity was the last which he would have liked to excite."

He was indeed a wonderfully gifted fellow, full of all sorts of energy and talent, and power and tenderness; and yet, as his face told only too truly to any one who watched him when he was exerting himself in society, one of the most wretched men in the college. He had a passion for success, — for beating everybody else in whatever he took in hand, and that, too, without seeming to make any great effort himself. The doing a thing well and thoroughly gave him no satisfaction unless he could feel that he was doing it better and more easily than A, B, or C, and that they felt and acknowledged this. He had had his full swing of success for two years, and now the Nemesis was coming.

For, although not an extravagant man, many of the pursuits in which he had eclipsed all rivals were far beyond the means of any but a rich one, and Blake was not



rich. He had a fair allowance, but by the end of his first year was considerably in debt, and, at the time we are speaking of, the whole pack of Oxford tradesmen into whose books he had got (having smelt out the leanness of his expectations), were upon him, besieging him for payment. This miserable and constant annoyance was wearing his soul out. This was the reason why his oak was sported, and he was never seen till the afternoons, and turned night into day. He was too proud to come to any understanding with his persecutors, even had it been possible; and now, at his sorest need, his whole scheme of life was failing him; his love of success was turning into ashes in his mouth; he felt much more disgust than pleasure at his triumphs over other men, and yet the habit of striving for such successes, notwithstanding its irksomeness was too strong to be resisted.

Poor Blake! he was living on from hand to mouth, flashing out with all his old brilliancy and power, and forcing himself to take the lead in whatever company he might be; but utterly lonely and depressed when by himself — reading feverishly in secret, in a desperate effort to retrieve all by high honors and a fellowship. As Tom said to his neighbor, there was no sadder face than his to be seen in Oxford.

And yet at this very wine party he was the life of every thing, as he sat up there between Diogenes — whom he kept in a constant sort of mild epileptic fit, from laughter, and wine going the wrong way (for whenever Diogenes raised his glass Blake shot him with some joke) — and the captain, who watched him with the most undisguised admiration. A singular contrast, the two men! Miller, though Blake was the torment of his life, relaxed after the first quarter of an hour; and our hero, by the

same time, gave himself credit for being a much greater ass than he was, for having ever thought Blake's face a sad one.

When the room was quite full, and enough wine had been drunk to open the hearts of the guests, Diogenes rose on a signal from Miller, and opened the budget. The financial statement was a satisfactory one; the club was almost free of debt; and, comparing their positions with that of other colleges, Diogenes advised that they might fairly burden themselves a little more, and then, if they would stand a whip of five shillings a man, they might have a new boat, which he believed they all would agree had become necessary. Miller supported the new boat in a pungent little speech; and the captain, when appealed to, nodded and said he thought they must have one. So the small supplies and the large addition to the club debt were voted unanimously, and the captain, Miller, and Blake, who had many notions as to the flooring lines and keel of a racing boat, were appointed to order and superintend the building.

Soon afterwards, coffee came in and cigars were lighted; a large section of the party went off to play pool, others to stroll about the streets, others to whist; a few, let us hope, to their own rooms to read; but these latter were a sadly small minority even in the quietest of St. Ambrose parties.

Tom, who was fascinated by the heroes at the head of the table, sat steadily on, sidling up towards them as the intermediate places became vacant, and at last attained the next chair but one to the captain, where for the time he sat in perfect bliss. Blake and Miller were telling boating stories of the Henley and Thames regattas, the latter of which had lately been started with great *éclat*; and

from these great yearly events, and the deeds of prowess done thereat, the talk came gradually round to the next races.

"Now, captain," said Miller suddenly, "have you thought yet whom we are to try in the crew this year?"

"No, 'pon my honor I haven't," said the captain; "I'm reading, and have no time to spare. Besides, after all, there's lots of time to think about it. Here, we're only half through Lent term, and the races don't begin till the end of Easter term."

"It wont do," said Miller; "we *must* get the crew together this term."

"Well, you and Smith put your heads together and manage it," said the captain. "I will go down any day, and as often as you like, at two o'clock."

"Let's see," said Miller to Smith, "how many of the old crew have we left?"

"Five, counting Blake," answered Diogenes.

"Counting me! well, that's cool," laughed Blake; "you old tub-haunting flute-player, why am I not to be counted?"

"You never will train, you see," said Diogenes.

"Smith is quite right," said Miller; "there's no counting on you, Blake. Now be a good fellow and promise to be regular this year."

"I'll promise to do my work in a race, which is more than some of your best-trained men will do," said Blake, rather piqued.

"Well, you know what I think on the subject," said Miller; "but whom have we got for the other three places?"

"There's Drysdale would do," said Diogenes; "I heard he was a capital oar at Eton; and so, though I don't know him, I managed to get him once down last

term. He would do famously for No. 2, or No. 3, if he would pull."

"Do you think he will, Blake? You know him, I suppose," said Miller.

"Yes, I know him well enough," said Blake; and, shrugging his shoulders, added, "I don't think you will get him to train much."

"Well, we must try," said Miller. "Now, who else is there?"

Smith went through with four or five names, at each of which Miller shook his head.

"Any promising freshmen?" said he, at last.

"None better than Brown here," said Smith; "I think he'll do well, if he will only work, and stand being coached."

"Have you ever pulled much?" said Miller.

"No," said Tom, "never till this last month — since I've been up here."

"All the better," said Miller; "now, captain, you hear; we may probably have to go in with three new hands; they must get into your stroke this term, or we shall be nowhere."

"Very well," said the captain; "I'll give from two till five any days you like."

"And now let's go and have one pool," said Blake, getting up. "Come, captain, just one little pool after all this business."

Diogenes insisted on staying to play his flute; Miller was engaged; but the captain, with a little coaxing, was led away by Blake, and good-naturedly asked Tom to accompany them, when he saw that he was looking as if he would like it. So the three went off to the billiard-rooms; Tom in such spirits at the chance of his being tried in the crew, that he hardly noticed the exceedingly



bad exchange which he had involuntarily made of his new cap and gown for a third-year cap with the board broken into several pieces, and a fusty old gown which had been about college probably for ten generations. I wonder whether undergraduate morality has improved in this matter of stealing caps and gowns as much as I believe it has in other matters since my time.

They found the St. Ambrose pool-room full of the fast set; and Tom enjoyed his game much, though his three lives were soon disposed of. The captain and Blake were the last lives on the board, and divided the pool at Blake's suggestion. He had scarcely the nerve for playing out a single-handed match with such an iron-nerved, steady piece of humanity as the captain, though he was the more brilliant player of the two. The party then broke up, and Tom returned to his rooms; and, when he was by himself again, his thoughts recurred to Hardy. How odd, he thought, that they never mentioned him for the boat! Could he have done any thing to be ashamed of? How was it that nobody seemed to know him, and he to know nobody?

Most readers, I doubt not, will think our hero very green for being puzzled at so simple a matter; and, no doubt, the steps in the social scale in England are very clearly marked out, and we all come to the appreciation of the gradations sooner or later. But our hero's previous education must be taken into consideration. He had not been instructed at home to worship mere conventional distinctions of rank or wealth, and had gone to a school which was not frequented by persons of rank, and where no one knew whether a boy was heir to a principality or would have to fight his own way in the world. So he was rather taken by surprise at what he found to be the state of things at St. Ambrose's, and didn't easily realize it.

## CHAPTER V.

### HARDY, THE SERVITOR.

It was not long before Tom had effected his object in part. That is to say, he had caught Hardy several times in the quadrangle coming out of the Lecture, Hall, or Chapel, and had fastened himself upon him; often walking with him even up to the door of his rooms. But there matters ended. Hardy was very civil and gentlemanly; he even seemed pleased with the volunteered companionship; but there was undoubtedly a coolness about him which Tom could not make out. But, as he only liked Hardy more, the more he saw of him, he very soon made up his mind to break ground himself, and to make a dash at any rate for something more than a mere speaking acquaintance.

One evening he had as usual walked from hall with Hardy up to his door, where they stopped a moment talking; and then Hardy, half opening the door, said, "Well, good-night; perhaps we shall meet on the river to-morrow," and was going in, when Tom, looking him in the face, blurted out, "I say, Hardy, I wish you'd let me come in and sit with you a bit."

"I never ask a man of our college into my rooms," answered the other, "but come in by all means if you like;" and so they entered.

The room was the worst, both in situation and furniture, which Tom had yet seen. It was on the ground-floor, with only one window, which looked out into a back

yard, where were the offices of the college. All day, and up to nine o'clock at night, the yard and offices were filled with scouts; boys cleaning boots and knives; bed-makers emptying slops and tattling scandal; scullions peeling potatoes and listening; and the butchers' and green-grocers' men who supplied the college, and loitered about to gossip and get a taste of the college—all before going about their business. The room was large, but low and close, and the floor uneven. The furniture did not add to the cheerfulness of the apartment. It consisted of one large table in the middle, covered with an old chequered table-cloth, and an Oxford table near the window, on which lay half a dozen books with writing materials. A couple of plain Windsor chairs occupied the two sides of the fireplace, and half a dozen common wooden chairs stood against the opposite wall, three on each side of a pretty-well-filled bookcase; while an old rickety sofa, covered with soiled chintz, leaned against the wall which fronted the window, as if to rest its lame leg. The carpet and rug were dingy, and decidedly the worse for wear; and the college had evidently neglected to paper the room or whitewash the ceiling for several generations. On the mantelpiece reposed a few long clay pipes and a brown earthenware receptacle for tobacco, together with a japanned tin case, shaped like a figure of eight, the use of which puzzled Tom exceedingly. One modestly framed drawing of a ten-gun brig hung above, and at the side of the fireplace a sword and belt. All this Tom had time to remark by the light of the fire, which was burning brightly while his host produced a couple of brass candlesticks from his cupboard and lighted up, and drew the curtain before his window. Then Tom instinctively left off taking notes, for fear of hurting the other's feelings (just as he would have gone on doing so, and making remarks on every

thing, had the rooms been models of taste and comfort), and throwing his cap and gown on the sofa, sat down on one of the Windsor chairs.

"What a jolly chair," said he; "where do you get them? I should like to buy one."

"Yes, they're comfortable enough," said Hardy, "but the reason I have them is that they're the cheapest arm-chairs one can get; I like an arm-chair, and can't afford to have any other than these."

Tom dropped the subject of the chairs at once, following his instinct again, which sad to say, was already teaching him that poverty is a disgrace to a Briton, and that, until you know a man thoroughly, you must always seem to assume that he is the owner of unlimited ready money. Somehow or another he began to feel embarrassed, and couldn't think of any thing to say, as his host took down the pipes and tobacco from the mantelpiece, and placed them on the table. However, any thing was better than silence; so he began again.

"Very good-sized rooms yours seem," said he taking up a pipe mechanically.

"Big enough, for the matter of that," answered the other, "but very dark and noisy in the daytime."

"So I should think," said Tom; "do you know, I'd sooner now have my freshman's rooms up in the garrets. I wonder you don't change."

"I get these for nothing," said his host, putting his long clay to the candle, and puffing out volumes of smoke. Tom was stumped again, and felt more and more unequal to the situation—so began filling his pipe in silence. The first whiff made him cough, as he wasn't used to the fragrant weed in this shape.

"I'm afraid you don't smoke tobacco," said his host



from behind his own cloud ; “ shall I go out and fetch you a cigar ? I don’t smoke them myself ; I can’t afford it.”

“ No, thank you,” said Tom, blushing for shame, as if he had come there only to insult his host, and wishing himself heartily out of it ; “ I’ve got my case here ; and the fact is I will smoke a cigar if you’ll allow me, for I’m not up to pipes yet. I wish you’d take some,” he went on, emptying his cigars on the table.

“ Thank’ee,” replied his host, “ I prefer a pipe. And now what will you have to drink ? I don’t keep wine, but I can get a bottle of any thing you like from the common room. That’s one of *our* privileges,”— he gave a grim chuckle as he emphasized the word “ *our*.”

“ Who on earth are *we* ?” thought Tom ; “ servitors, I suppose,” for he knew already that undergraduates in general could not get wine from the college cellars.

“ I don’t care a straw about wine,” said he, feeling very hot about the ears : “ a glass of beer, or any thing you have here — or tea.”

“ Well, I can give you a pretty good glass of whiskey,” said his host, going to the cupboard, and producing a black bottle, two tumblers of different sizes, some little wooden toddy ladles, and sugar in an old cracked glass.

Tom vowed that, if there was one thing in the world he liked more than another, it was whiskey ; and began measuring out the liquor carefully into his tumbler, and rolling it round between his eye and the candle, and smelling it, to show what a treat it was to him ; while his host put the kettle on the fire, to ascertain that it was quite boiling, and then, as it spluttered and fizzed, filled up the two tumblers, and restored it to its place on the hob.

Tom swallowed some of the mixture, which nearly made him cough again — for, though it was very good, it was also very potent ; however, by an effort he managed

to swallow his cough ; he would about as soon have lost a little finger as let it out. Then, to his great relief, his host took the pipe from his lips and inquired, "How do you like Oxford?"

"I hardly know yet," said Tom ; "the first few days I was delighted with going about and seeing the buildings, and finding out who had lived in each of the old colleges, and pottering about in the Bodleian, and fancying I should like to be a great scholar. Then I met several old school-fellows going about, who are up at other colleges, and went to their rooms and talked over old times. But none of my very intimate friends are up yet, and unless you care very much about a man already, you don't seem to be likely to get intimate with him up here, unless he is at your own college."

He paused as if expecting an answer.

"I dare say not," said Hardy ; "but I never was at a public school, unluckily, and so am no judge."

"Well, then, as to the college life," went on Tom, "it's all very well as far as it goes. There's plenty of liberty, and good food. And the men seem nice fellows — many of them at least, as far as I can judge. But I can't say that I like it as much as I liked our school life."

"I don't understand," said Hardy. "Why not?"

"Oh ! I hardly know," said Tom, laughing ; "I don't seem as if I had any thing to do here ; that's one reason, I think. And then, you see, at Rugby I was rather a great man. There one had a share in the ruling of three hundred boys, and a good deal of responsibility. But here one has only just to take care of one's self, and keep out of scrapes ; and that's what I never could do. What do you think a fellow ought to do now up here?"

"Oh ! I don't see much difficulty in that," said his host, smiling ; "get up your lectures well, to begin with."

"But my lectures are a farce," said Tom; "I've done all the books over and over again. They don't take me an hour a day to get up."

"Well, then, set to work reading something regularly — reading for your degree, for instance."

"Oh, hang it! I can't look so far forward as that; I sha'n't be going up for three years."

"You can't begin too early. You might go and talk to your college-tutor about it."

"So I did," said Tom; "at least I meant to do it. For he asked me and two other freshmen to breakfast the other morning, and I was going to open out to him. But when I got there I was quite shut up. He never looked one of us in the face, and talked in set sentences, and was cold, and formal, and condescending. The only bit of advice he gave us was to have nothing to do with boating — just the one thing which I feel a real interest in. I couldn't get out a word of what I wanted to say."

"It is unlucky, certainly, that our present tutors take so little interest in any thing which the men care about. But it is more from shyness than any thing else, that manner which you noticed. You may be sure that he was more wretched and embarrassed than any of you."

"Well, but now I should really like to know what you did yourself," said Tom; "you are the only man of much older standing than myself whom I know at all yet — I mean I don't know anybody else well enough to talk about this sort of thing to them. What did you do now, besides learning to pull, in your first year?"

"I had learnt to pull before I came up here," said Hardy. "I really hardly remember what I did besides read. You see I came up with a definite purpose of reading. My father was very anxious that I should be a good scholar. Then my position in the college and my

poverty naturally kept me out of many things which other men do."

Tom flushed again at the ugly word, but not so much as at first. Hardy couldn't mind the subject, or he would never be forcing it up at every turn, he thought.

"You wouldn't think it," he began again, harping on the same string, "but I can hardly tell you how I miss the sort of responsibility I was talking to you about. I have no doubt I shall get the vacuum filled up before long, but for the life of me I can't see how yet."

"You will be a very lucky fellow if you don't find it quite as much as you can do to keep yourself in order up here. It is about the toughest part of a man's life, I do believe, the time he has to spend here. My university life has been so different altogether from what yours will be, that my experience isn't likely to benefit you."

"I wish you would try me, though," said Tom; "you don't know what a teachable sort of fellow I am, if anybody will take me the right way. You taught me to scull, you know; or at least put me in the way to learn. But sculling, and rowing, and cricket, and all the rest of it, with such reading as I am likely to do, wont be enough. I feel sure of that already."

"I don't think it will," said Hardy. "No amount of physical or mental work will fill the vacuum you were talking of just now. It is the empty house swept and garnished, which the boy might have had glimpses of, but the man finds yawning within him, and which must be filled somehow. It's a pretty good three years' work to learn how to keep the devils out of it, more or less, by the time you take your degree. At least I have found it so."

Hardy rose and took a turn or two up and down his room. He was astonished at finding himself talking so unreservedly to one of whom he knew so little, and half



wished the words recalled. He lived much alone, and thought himself morbid and too self-conscious; why should he be filling a youngster's head with puzzles? How did he know that they were thinking of the same thing?

But the spoken word cannot be recalled; it must go on its way for good or evil; and this one set the hearer staring into the ashes, and putting many things together in his head.

It was some minutes before he broke silence, but at last he gathered up his thoughts, and said, "Well, I hope I sha'n't shirk when the time comes. You don't think a fellow need shut himself up though? I'm sure I shouldn't be any the better for that."

"No, I don't think you would," said Hardy.

"Because, you see," Tom went on waxing bolder and more confidential, "if I were to take to moping by myself, I shouldn't read as you or any sensible fellow would do; I know that well enough. I should just begin, sitting with my legs up on the mantelpiece, and looking into my own inside. I see you are laughing, but you know what I mean; don't you now?"

"Yes; staring into the vacuum you were talking of just now; it all comes back to that," said Hardy.

"Well, perhaps it does," said Tom; "and I don't believe it does a fellow a bit of good to be thinking about himself and his own doings."

"Only he can't help himself," said Hardy. "Let him throw himself, as he will, into all that is going on up here, after all he must be alone for a great part of his time — all night at any rate — and when he gets his oak sported, it's all up with him. He must be looking more or less into his own inside, as you call it."

"Then I hope he wont find it as ugly a business as I do. If he does, I'm sure he can't be worse employed."

"I don't know that," said Hardy; "he can't learn any thing worth learning in any other way."

"Oh, I like that!" said Tom; "it's worth learning how to play tennis, and how to speak the truth. You can't learn either by thinking about yourself ever so much."

"You must know the truth before you can speak it," said Hardy.

"So you always do in plenty of time."

"How?" said Hardy.

"Oh! I don't know," said Tom; "by a sort of instinct, I suppose. I never, in my life, felt any doubt about what I *ought* to say or do; did you?"

"Well, yours is a good, comfortable, working belief, at any rate," said Hardy, smiling; "and I should advise you to hold on to it as long as you can."

"But you don't think I can for very long, eh?"

"No; but men are very different. There's no saying. If you were going to get out of the self-dissecting business altogether though, why should you have brought the subject up at all to-night? It looks awkward for you; doesn't it?"

Tom began to feel rather forlorn at this suggestion, and probably betrayed it in his face, for Hardy changed the subject suddenly.

"How do you get on in the boat? I saw you going down to-day, and thought the time much better."

Tom felt greatly relieved, as he was beginning to find himself in rather deep water: so he rushed into boating with great zest, and the two chatted on very pleasantly on that and other like matters, of little interest to the general reader.

The college clock struck during a pause in their talk, and Tom looked at his watch.

"Eight o'clock, I declare," he said; "why I must have

been here more than two hours. I'm afraid, now, you have been wanting to work, and I have kept you from it with my talk."

"No, it's Saturday night. Besides, I don't get much society that I care about, and so I enjoy it all the more. Wont you stop and have some tea?"

Tom gladly consented, and his host produced a somewhat dilapidated set of crockery, and proceeded to brew the drink least appreciated at St. Ambrose's. Tom watched him in silence, much exercised in his mind as to what manner of man he had fallen upon; very much astonished at himself for having opened out so freely, and feeling a strange desire to know more of Hardy, not unmingled with a sort of nervousness as to how he was to accomplish it.

When Hardy sat down again and began pouring out the tea, curiosity overcame, and he opened with—

"So you read most nights after hall?"

"Yes, for two or three hours; longer, when I am in a good humor."

"What, all by yourself?"

"Generally; but once or twice a week Grant comes in to compare notes. Do you know him?"

"No; at least he hasn't called on me. I have just spoken to him."

"He is a very quiet fellow, and I dare say doesn't call on any man unless he knew something of him before."

"Don't you?"

"Never," said Hardy, shortly; and added after a short pause, "very few men would thank me if I did; most would think it impertinent, and I'm too proud to risk that."

Tom was on the point of asking why; but the uncomfortable feeling he had nearly lost came back on him.

"I suppose one very soon gets tired of the wine-and-supper-party life, though I own I find it pleasant enough now."

"I have never been tried," said Hardy; "servitors are not troubled with that kind of thing. If they were, I wouldn't go unless I could return them, and that I can't afford."

"There he goes again," thought Tom; "why will he be throwing that old story in my face over and over again? he can't think I care about his poverty; I won't change the subject this time, at any rate." And so he said:—

"You don't mean to say that it makes any real difference to a man in society up here, whether he is poor or rich; I mean, of course, if he is a gentleman and a good fellow?"

"Yes, it does—the very greatest possible. But don't take my word for it. Keep your eyes open and judge for yourself; I dare say I'm prejudiced on the subject."

"Well, I shan't believe it if I can help it," said Tom; "you know you said just now that you never called on any one. Perhaps you don't give men a fair chance. They might be glad to know you if you would let them, and may think it's your fault that they don't."

"Very possibly," said Hardy; "I tell you not to take my word for it."

"It upsets all one's ideas so," went on Tom; "why, Oxford ought to be *the* place in England where money should count for nothing. Surely, now, such a man as Jervis, our captain, has more influence than all the rich men in the college put together, and is more looked up to?"

"He's one of a thousand," said Hardy; "handsome, strong, good-tempered, clever, and up to every thing. Besides, he isn't a poor man; and mind, I don't say that,



if he were, he wouldn't be where he is. I am speaking of the rule, and not of the exceptions."

Here Hardy's scout came in to say that the dean wanted to speak to him. So he put on his cap and gown, and Tom rose also.

"Well, I'm sorry to turn you out," said Hardy, "and I'm afraid I've been very surly and made you very uncomfortable. You won't come back again in a hurry."

"Indeed I will though, if you will let me," said Tom; "I have enjoyed my evening immensely."

"Then come whenever you like," said Hardy.

"But I am afraid of interfering with your reading," said Tom.

"Oh! you needn't mind that; I have plenty of time on my hands; besides, one can't read all night, and from eight to ten you'll find me generally idle."

"Then you'll see me often enough. But promise now to turn me out whenever I am in the way."

"Very well," said Hardy, laughing; and so they parted for the time.

Some twenty minutes afterwards Hardy returned to his room after his interview with the dean, who merely wanted to speak to him about some matter of college business. He flung his cap and gown on to the sofa, and began to walk up and down his room, at first hurriedly, but soon with his usual regular tramp. However expressive a man's face may be, and however well you may know it, it is simply nonsense to say that you can tell what he is thinking about by looking at it, as many of us are apt to boast. Still more absurd would it be to expect readers to know what Hardy is thinking about, when they have never had the advantage of seeing his face even in a photograph. Wherefore, it would seem that the author is bound on such occasions to put his readers on equal van-

tage-ground with himself, and not only to tell them what a man does, but, so far as may be, what he is thinking about also.

His first thought then was one of pleasure at having been sought out by one who seemed to be just the sort of friend he would like to have. He contrasted our hero with the few men with whom he generally lived, and for some of whom he had a high esteem — whose only idea of exercise was a two hours' constitutional walk in the afternoons, and whose life was chiefly spent over books and behind sported oaks — and felt that this was more of a man after his own heart. Then came doubts whether his new friend would draw back when he had been up a little longer, and knew more of the place. At any rate, he had said and done nothing to tempt him; "if he pushes the acquaintance,—and I think he will,—it will be because he likes me for myself. And I can do him good, too, I feel sure," he went on, as he ran over rapidly his own life for the last three years. "Perhaps he wont flounder into all the sloughs that I have had to drag through; he will get too much of the healthy, active life up here for that, which I have never had; but some of them he must get into. All the companionship of boating and cricketing, and wine parties and supper parties, and all the reading in the world wont keep him from many a long hour of mawkishness, and discontent, and emptiness of heart; he feels that already himself. Am I sure of that though? I may be only reading myself into him. At any rate, why should I have helped to trouble him before the time? Was that a friend's part? Well, he *must* face it, and the sooner the better perhaps. At any rate, it is done. But what a blessed thing if one can only help a youngster like this to fight his way through the cold, clammy atmosphere which is always hanging over him, and ready to settle

down on him — can help to keep some living faith in him, that the world, Oxford, and all, isn't a respectable piece of machinery set going some centuries back! Ah! it's an awful business, that temptation to believe, or think you believe, in a dead God. It has nearly broken my back a score of times. What are all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the Devil to this? It includes them all. Well, I believe I can help him, and, please God, I will, if he will only let me; and the very sight of him does me good; so I won't believe we went down the lasher together for nothing."

And so at last Hardy finished his walk, took down a book from his shelves, which to the best of my belief, was Don Quixote, — at any rate, I know that the great Spaniard was an especial favorite of his, — and sat down for an hour's enjoyment before turning in.

The reader very likely by this time is beginning to wonder which is the odder or madder of the two — the author, or his St. Ambrose servitor. I can only say that I never have asserted the sanity or freedom from eccentricity of either. If the reader never had any such thoughts himself, he is a lucky fellow, and need not mind them; if he should have had any such, he will know how to sympathize with him who is exercised with them, and with him who attempts, however feebly, to bring them out into the light of day.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HOW DRYSDALE AND BLAKE WENT FISHING.

"DRYSDALE, what's a servitor?"

"How the deuce should I know?"

This short and pithy dialogue took place in Drysdale's rooms one evening soon after the conversation recorded in the last chapter. He and Tom were sitting alone there, for a wonder, and so the latter seized the occasion to propound this question, which he had had on his mind for some time. He was scarcely satisfied with the above rejoinder, but while he was thinking how to come at the subject by another road, Drysdale opened a morocco fly-book, and poured its contents on the table, which was already covered with flies of all sorts and patterns, hanks of gut, delicate made-up casts, reels, minnows, and tackle enough to kill all the fish in the four neighboring counties. Tom began turning them over and scrutinizing the dressings of the flies.

"It has been so mild, the fish must be in season, don't you think? Besides, if they're not, it's a jolly drive to Fairford, at any rate. You've never been behind my team, Brown. You'd better come, now, to-morrow."

"I can't cut my two lectures."

"Bother your lectures! Put on an æger, then."

"No! that doesn't suit my book, you know."

"I can't see why you should be so cursedly particular. Well, if you wont, you wont; I know that well enough. But what cast should you fish with to-morrow?"



"How many flies do you use?"

"Sometimes two, sometimes three."

"Two's enough, I think; all depends on the weather; but, if it's at all like to-day, you can't do better, I should think, than the old March brown and a palmer to begin with. Then, for change, this hare's ear, and an alder fly, perhaps; or,—let me see," and he began searching the glittering heap to select a color to go with the dull hare's ear.

"Isn't it early for the alder?" said Drysdale.

"Rather, perhaps; but they can't resist it."

"These bang-tailed little sinners any good?" said Drysdale, throwing some cock-a-bondies across the table.

"Yes; I never like to be without them, and a governor or two. Here, this is a well-tied lot," said Tom, picking out half a dozen. "You never know when you may not kill with either of them. But I don't know the Fairford water; so my opinion isn't worth much."

More talk of a like kind went on, not interesting to the general reader. And you, O reader! who are a fisherman, to whom my heart warms as I pen these lines, do you not know it all as well as I? The delight of sitting handling tackle and talking fishing talk, though you mayn't get three days' fishing a year; the difficulty you have in advising any brother of the craft to leave a single well-tied taking-looking fly out of his book, though you know, from experience, that it would be probably better for him if he had only some four or five flies in the world. Well, after thirty, or thereabouts, we must all, I suppose, lay our account to enjoying such things mostly in talk. It is a real pleasure, though, to go on talking, and so enjoying by anticipation splendid days of salmon-fishing and hunting, though they never really arrive.

When the conversation flagged, Tom returned to the old topic.

"But now, Drysdale, you must know what a servitor is?"

"Why should I? Do you mean one of our college servitors?"

"Yes."

"Oh! something in the upper-servant line. I should put him above the porter, and below the cook and butler. He does the dons' dirty work, and gets their broken victuals; and I believe he pays no college fees."

Tom rather drew into himself at this insolent and off-hand definition. He was astonished and hurt at the tone of his friend. However, presently, he resolved to go through with it, and began again.

"But servitors are gentlemen, I suppose?"

"A good deal of the cock-tail about them, I should think. But I have not the honor of any acquaintance amongst them."

"At any rate, they are undergraduates; are not they?"

"Yes."

"And may take degrees, just like you or me?"

"They may have all the degrees to themselves, for any thing I care. I wish they would let one pay a servitor for passing little-go for one. It would be deuced comfortable. I wonder it don't strike the dons, now; they might get clever beggars for servitors, and farm them, and so make loads of tin."

"But, Drysdale, seriously, why should you talk like that? If they can take all the degrees we can, and are, in fact, just what we are, undergraduates, I can't see why they're not as likely to be gentlemen as we. It can surely make no difference, their being poor men?"

"It must make them devilish uncomfortable," said the incorrigible payer of double fees, getting up to light his cigar.

"The name ought to carry respect here, at any rate. The Black Prince was an Oxford man, and he thought the noblest motto he could take was 'Ich dien,' I serve."

"If he were here now, he would change it for 'Je paye.'"

"I often wish you would tell me what you really and truly think, Drysdale."

"My dear fellow, I'm telling you what I do really think. Whatever the Black Prince might be pleased to observe if he were here, I stick to my motto. I tell you the thing to be able to do here at Oxford is—to pay."

"I don't believe it."

"I knew you wouldn't."

"I don't believe you do, either."

"I do, though. But what makes you so curious about servitors?"

"Why, I've made friends with Hardy, one of our servitors. He is such a fine fellow!"

I am sorry to relate that it cost Tom an effort to say this to Drysdale; but he despised himself that it was so.

"You should have told me so before you began to pump me," said Drysdale. "However, I partly suspected something of the sort. You've a good bit of a Quixote in you. But really, Brown," he added, seeing Tom redden and look angry, "I'm sorry if what I said pained you. I dare say this friend of yours is a gentleman, and all you say."

"He is more of a gentleman by a long way than most of the—"

"Gentlemen-commoners,' you were going to say. Don't crane at such a small fence on my account. I will put it in another way for you. He can't be a greater snob than many of them."

"Well, but why do you live with them so much, then?"

"Why? Because they happen to do the things I like doing, and live up here as I like to live. I like hunting and driving, and drawing badgers and playing cards, and good wines and cigars. They hunt and drive, and keep dogs and good cellars, and will play unlimited loo or Van John as long as I please."

"But I know you get very sick of all that often, for I've heard you say as much half a dozen times in the little time I've been here."

"Why, you don't want to deny me the Briton's privilege of grumbling, do you?" said Drysdale, as he flung his legs up on the sofa, crossing one over the other as he lounged on his back — his favorite attitude; "but suppose I am getting tired of it all — which I'm not — what do you propose as a substitute?"

"Take to boating. I know you could be in the first boat if you liked; I heard them say so at Smith's wine the other night."

"But what's to prevent my getting just as tired of that? Besides, it's such a grind. And then there's the bore of changing all one's habits."

"Yes, but it's such splendid hard work," said Tom, who was bent on making a convert of his friend.

"Just so; and that's just what I don't want; the 'books, and work, and healthful play' line don't suit my complaint. No; as my old uncle says, 'a young fellow must sow his wild oats,' and Oxford seems a place specially set apart by Providence for that operation."

In all the wide range of accepted British maxims there is none, take it for all in all, more thoroughly abominable than this one as to the sowing of wild oats. Look at it on what side you will, and I will defy you to make any



thing but a devil's maxim of it. What a man — be he young, old, or middle-aged — sows, *that*, and nothing else, shall he reap. The one only thing to do with wild oats, is to put them carefully into the hottest part of the fire, and get them burnt to dust, every seed of them. If you sow them, no matter in what ground, up they will come, with long, tough roots like couch-grass, and luxuriant stalks and leaves, as sure as there is a sun in heaven — a crop which it turns one's heart cold to think of. The Devil, too, whose special crop they are, will see that they thrive, and you, and nobody else, will have to reap them; and no common reaping will get them out of the soil, which must be dug down deep again and again. Well for you if with all your care you can make the ground sweet again by your dying day. "Boys will be boys" is not much better, but that has a true side to it; but this encouragement to the sowing of wild oats is simply devilish, for it means that a young man is to give way to the temptations and follow the lusts of his age. What are we to do with the wild oats of manhood and old age — with ambition, over-reaching, the false weights, hardness, suspicion, avarice — if the wild oats of youth are to be sown and not burnt? What possible distinction can we draw between them? If we may sow the one, why not the other? However (as I have been reminded — perhaps not without reason, certainly in the kindest manner — on several occasions), I am writing the story of a life, or rather of part of a life, and not sermons; and though I protest against the critical law, that a writer of fiction ought to confine himself to trying to amuse, I would much rather produce such truth as there is in me, and such faith as I hold and desire to see spreading, by means of the characters in my story, than in the shape of comment in my own person. Only in trying to do so I am often met by another critical law, which seems to me

to be a higher and sounder one than the other; viz., that an author has no right to get behind his characters and pour out of their mouths opinions and speculations on deeply interesting questions in which he has just dabbled enough to feel their attraction, without having ever come on firm ground or made up his mind. I feel that the critic is right in bringing me to book, and saying, Come now, *do you* believe this or that?

What is a man to do, then, who has beliefs and writes to bring them out? You will say doubtless, dear reader, write essays, sermons, what you will, only not fiction. To which I would reply, Gladly, O dear reader, would I write essays or sermons, seeing that they take less out of one than fiction—but would you read them? You know you wouldn't. And so, if I sometimes stray into the pulpit, I do hope you won't be so ungenerous as to skip my preachings. To drink all a fellow's sack up, and then make faces at his poor pennyworth of bread, is altogether unmanly and un-British; and, if you should take to indulging yourself in this manner, I shall begin to think that you are capable of running away or crying out for peace at any price when the French shall have landed at several points on our coast simultaneously.

But to get back to our story. Tom went away from Drysdale's rooms that night, after they had sorted all the tackle which was to accompany the fishing expedition to their satisfaction, in a disturbed state of mind. He was very much annoyed at Drysdale's way of talking, because he was getting to like the man. He was surprised and angry at being driven more and more to the conclusion that the worship of the golden calf was verily and indeed rampant in Oxford—side by side, no doubt, with much that was manly and noble, but tainting more or less the whole life of the place. In fact, what annoyed him most,

was the consciousness that he himself was becoming an idolator; for he couldn't help admitting that he felt much more comfortable when standing in the quadrangles or strolling in the High Street with Drysdale in his velvet cap, and silk gown, and faultless get-up, than when doing the same things with Hardy in his faded old gown, shabby loose overcoat and well-worn trousers. He wouldn't have had Hardy suspect the fact for all he was worth, and hoped to get over the feeling soon; but there it was unmistakably. He wondered whether Hardy had ever felt any thing of the kind himself.

Nevertheless, these thoughts did not hinder him from sleeping soundly, or from getting up an hour earlier than usual to go and see Drysdale start on his expedition.

Accordingly, he was in Drysdale's rooms next morning betimes, and assisted at the early breakfast which was going on there. Blake was the only other man present. He was going with Drysdale, and entrusted Tom with a message to Miller and the captain, that he could not pull in the boat that day, but would pay a waterman to take his place. As soon as the gate opened, the three, accompanied by the faithful Jack, and followed by Drysdale's scout, bearing over-coats, a splendid water-proof apron lined with fur, and the rods and creels, sallied out of college, and sought the livery stables patronized by the men of St. Ambrose. Here they found a dog-cart all ready in the yard, with a strong Roman-nosed, vicious-looking, rat-tailed horse in the shafts, called Satan, by Drysdale; the leader had been sent on to the first turnpike. The things were packed, and Jack, the bull-dog, hoisted into the interior in a few minutes. Drysdale produced a long, straight horn, which he called his yard of tin (probably because it was made of brass), and after refreshing himself with a blast or two, handed it over to Blake, and then mounted

the dog-cart, and took the reins. Blake seated himself by his side; the help who was to accompany them, got up behind; and Jack looked wisely out from his inside place over the backboard.

"Are we all right?" said Drysdale, catching his long tandem whip into a knowing double thong.

"All right, sir," said the head ostler, touching his cap.

"You'd better have come, my boy," said Drysdale to Tom, as they trotted off out of the yard; and Tom couldn't help envying them as he followed, and watched the dog-cart lessening rapidly down the empty street, and heard the notes of the yard of tin, which Blake managed to make really musical, borne back on the soft western breeze. It was such a stunning morning for fishing!

However, it was too late to repent, had he wished it; and so he got back to chapel, and destroyed the whole effect of the morning service on Miller's mind, by delivering Blake's message to that choleric coxswain as soon as chapel was over. Miller vowed for the twentieth time that Blake should be turned out of the boat, and went off to the captain's rooms to torment him, and consult what was to be done.

The weather continued magnificent — a soft, dull, gray March day, with a steady wind; and the thought of the lucky fishermen, and visions of creels filled with huge three-pounders, haunted Tom at lecture and throughout the day.

At two o'clock he was down at the river. The college eight was to go down for the first time in the season to the reaches below Nuneham, for a good training pull, and he had had notice, to his great joy, that he was to be tried in the boat. But, great, no doubt, as was the glory, the price was a heavy one. This was the first time he had been subjected to the tender mercies of Miller, the coxswain, or



had pulled behind the captain; and it did not take long to convince him that it was a very different style of thing from any thing he had as yet been accustomed to in the freshmen's crew. The long, steady sweep of the so-called paddle tried him almost as much as the breathless strain of the spurt.

Miller, too, was in one of his most relentless moods. He was angry at Blake's desertion, and seemed to think that Tom had had something to do with it, though he had simply delivered the message which had been entrusted to him; and so, though he distributed rebuke and objurgation to every man in the boat except the captain, he seemed to our hero to take particular delight in working him. There he stood in the stern, the fiery little coxswain, leaning forward with a tiller-rope in each hand, and bending to every stroke, shouting his warnings and rebukes, and monitions to Tom, till he drove him to his wits' end. By the time the boat came back to Hall's, his arms were so numb that he could hardly tell whether his oar was in or out of his hand; his legs were stiff and aching, and every muscle in his body felt as if it had been pulled out an inch or two. As he walked up to college, he felt as if his shoulders and legs had nothing to do with one another; in short he had had a very hard day's work, and, after going fast asleep at a wine party, and trying in vain to rouse himself by a stroll in the streets, fairly gave in about ten o'clock, and went to bed without remembering to sport his oak.

For some hours he slept the sleep of the dead, but at last began to be conscious of voices, and the clinking of glasses, and laughter, and scraps of songs; and after turning himself once or twice in bed, to ascertain whether he was awake or no, rubbed his eyes, sat up, and became aware that something very entertaining to the parties con-

cerned was going on in his sitting-room. After listening for a minute, he jumped up, threw on his shooting-coat, appeared at the door of his own sitting-room, where he paused a moment to contemplate the scene which met his astonished vision. His fire, recently replenished, was burning brightly in the grate, and his candles on the table, on which stood his whiskey bottle, and tumblers, and hot water. On his sofa, which had been wheeled round before the fire, reclined Drysdale, on his back, in his pet attitude, one leg crossed over the other, with a paper in his hand, from which he was singing, and in the arm-chair sat Blake, while Jack was coiled on the rug, turning himself every now and then in a sort of uneasy protest against his master's untimely hilarity. At first, Tom felt inclined to be angry, but the jolly shout of laughter with which Drysdale received him, as he stepped out into the light in night-shirt, shooting-coat, and dishevelled hair, took all the rile out of him at once.

"Why, Brown, you don't mean to say you have been in bed this last half-hour? We looked into the bedroom, and thought it was empty. Sit down, old fellow, and make yourself at home. Have a glass of grog; it's first-rate whiskey."

"Well, you're a couple of cool hands, I must say," said Tom. "How did you get in?"

"Through the door, like honest men," said Drysdale. "You're the only good fellow in college to-night. When we got back our fires were out, and we've been all round college, and found all the oaks sported but yours. Never sport your oak, old boy; it's a bad habit. You don't know at what time in the morning you may entertain angels unawares."

"You're a rum pair of angels, anyhow," said Tom, taking his seat on the sofa. "But what o'clock is it?"

"Oh! about half-past one," said Drysdale. "We've had a series of catastrophes. Never got into college till near one. I thought we should never have waked that besotted little porter. However, here we are at last, you see, all right."

"So it seems," said Tom; "but how about the fishing?"

"Fishing! we've never thrown a fly all day," said Drysdale.

"He is so cursedly conceited about his knowledge of the country," struck in Blake. "What with that, and his awful twist, and incurable habit of gossiping, and his blackguard dog, and his team of a devil and a young female —"

"Hold your scandalous tongue," shouted Drysdale. "To hear *you* talking of my twist, indeed; you ate four chops and a whole chicken to-day, at dinner, to your own cheek, you know."

"That's quite another thing," said Blake. "I like to see a fellow an honest grubber at breakfast and dinner; but you've always got your nose in the manger. That's how we got all wrong to-day, Brown. You saw what a breakfast he ate before starting; well, nothing would satisfy him but another at Whitney. There we fell in with a bird in mahogany tops, and, as usual, Drysdale began chumming with him. He knew all about the fishing of the next three counties. I dare say he did. My private belief is, that he is one of the Hungerford town council, who let the fishing there; at any rate, he swore it was no use our going to Fairford; the only place where fish would be in season was Hungerford. Of course, Drysdale swallowed it all, and nothing would serve him but that we should turn off for Hungerford at once. Now, I did go once to Hungerford races, and I ventured to suggest that we should never get near the place. Not a bit of use;

he knew every foot of the country. It was then about nine; he would guarantee that we should be there by twelve, at latest."

"So we should have been, but for accidents," struck in Drysdale.

"Well, at any rate, what we did was to drive into Farringdon, instead of Hungerford, both horses dead done up, at twelve o'clock, after missing our way about twenty times."

"Because you would put in your oar," said Drysdale.

"Then grub again," went on Blake, "and an hour to bait the horses. I knew we were as likely to get to Jericho as to Hungerford. However, he would start; but, luckily, about two miles from Farringdon, old Satan bowled quietly into a bank, broke a shaft, and deposited us then and there. He wasn't such a fool as to be going to Hungerford at that time of day; the first time in his wicked old life that I ever remember seeing him do any thing that pleased me."

"Come now," said Drysdale, "do you mean to say you ever sat behind a better wheeler, when he's in a decent temper?"

"Can't say," said Blake; "never sat behind him in a good temper, that I can remember."

"I'll trot him five miles out and home in a dog-cart, on any road out of Oxford, against any horse you can bring, for a fiver."

"Done!" said Blake.

"But were you upset?" said Tom. "How did you get into the bank?"

"Why, you see," said Drysdale, "Jessy — that's the little blood-mare, my leader — is very young, and as shy and skittish as the rest of her sex. We turned a corner



sharp, and came right upon a gypsy encampment. Up she went into the air in a moment, and then turned right round and came head on at the cart. I gave her the double thong across her face to send her back again, and Satan, seizing the opportunity, rushed against the bank, dragging her with him, and snapped the shaft."

"And so ended our day's fishing," said Blake. "And next moment out jumps that brute, Jack, and pitches into the gypsy's dog, who had come up very naturally to have a look at what was going on. Down jumps Drysdale, to see that his beast gets fair play, leaving me and the help to look after the wreck, and keep his precious wheeler from kicking the cart into little pieces."

"Come now," said Drysdale, "you must own we fell on our own legs after all. Hadn't we a jolly afternoon? I'm thinking of turning tramp, Brown. We spent three or four hours in that camp, and Blake got spooney on a gypsy girl, and has written I don't know how many songs on them. Didn't you hear us singing them just now?"

"But how did you get the cart mended?" said Tom.

"Oh! the tinker patched up the shaft for us — a cunning old beggar, the *père de famille* of the encampment; up to every move on the board. He wanted to have a deal with me for Jessy. But, 'pon my honor, we had a good time of it. There was the old tinker, mending the shaft, in his fur cap, with a black pipe, one inch long, sticking out of his mouth: and the old brown parchment of a mother, with her head in a red handkerchief, smoking a ditto pipe to the tinker's, who told our fortunes, and talked like a printed book. Then there was his wife, and the slip of a girl who bowled over Blake there, and half a dozen ragged brats; and a fellow on tramp, not a gypsy — some runaway apprentice I take it, but a jolly

dog — with no luggage but an old fiddle, on which he scraped away uncommonly well, and set Blake making rhymes as we sat in the tent. You never heard any of his songs. Here's one for each of us; we're going to get up the characters and sing them about the country; now for a rehearsal; I'll be the tinker."

"No; you must take the servant girl," said Blake.

"Well, we'll toss up for characters when the time comes. You begin then; here's the song;" and he handed one of the papers to Blake, who began singing:—

"Squat on a green plot,  
We scorn a bench or settle, oh!  
Plying and trying,  
A spice of every trade;  
Razors we grind,  
Ring a pig, or mend a kettle, oh!  
Come, what d'ye lack?  
Speak it out, my pretty maid.

"I'll set your scissors, while  
My granny tells you plainly,  
Who stole your barley meal,  
Your butter or your heart;  
Tell if your husband will  
Be handsome or ungainly,  
Ride in a coach and four, or  
Rough it in a cart."

"Enter Silly Sally; that's I, for the present, you see," said Drysdale; and he began —

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?  
Dear, dear! what can the matter be?  
Oh, dear! what can the matter be!  
All in a pucker be I;  
I'm growing uneasy about Billy Martin,  
For love is a casualty desper't' unsartin.  
Law! yonder's the gypsies as tells folks' fortin;  
I'm half in the mind for to try."

"Then you must be the old gypsy woman, Mother Patrico ; here's your part, Brown."

"But what's the tune ?" said Tom.

"Oh ! you can't miss it ; go ahead ;" and so Tom, who was dropping into the humor of the thing, droned out from the MS. handed to him —

"Chairs to mend,  
Old chairs to mend,  
Rush-bottom'd, cane bottom'd  
Chairs to mend.  
Maid, approach,  
If thou wouldst know  
What the stars  
May deign to show."

"Now, tinker," said Drysdale, nodding at Blake, who rattled on, —

"Chance feeds us, chance leads us  
Round the land in jollity ;  
Rag-dealing, nag-stealing,  
Everywhere we roam ;  
Brass mending, ass vending,  
Happier than the quality ;  
Swipes soaking, pipes smoking,  
Ev'ry barn a home ;  
Tink tink, a tink a tink,  
Our life is full of fun, boys ;  
Clink tink, a tink a tink,  
Our busy hammers ring ;  
Clink tink, a tink a tink,  
Our job will soon be done, boys ;  
Then tune we merrily  
The bladder and the string."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Oh, dear ! what can the matter be ?  
Dear, dear ! what can the matter be ?  
Oh, dear ! what can the matter be ?  
There's such a look in her eye.

Oh, lawk ! I declare I be all of a tremble ;  
 My mind it misgives me about Sukey Wimble,  
 A splatter-faced wench neither civil nor nimble !  
 She'll bring Billy to beggary."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"Show your hand ;  
 Come, show your hand !  
 Would you know  
 What fate hath planned ?  
 Heaven forefend,  
 Ay, Heav'n forefend !  
 What may these  
 Cross-lines portend ?"

BLAKE, *as the Tinker.*

"Owl, pheasant, all's pleasant ;  
 Nothing comes amiss to us ;  
 Hare, rabbit, snare, nab it,  
 Cock, or hen, or kite ;  
 Tom-cat, with strong fat,  
 A dainty supper is to us ;  
 Hedge-hog and sedge-frog  
 To stew is our delight ;  
 Bow, wow, with angry bark  
 My lady's dog assails us ;  
 We sack him up, and clap  
 A stopper on his din.  
 Now, pop him in the pot ;  
 His store of meat avails us ;  
 Wife cooks him nice and hot,  
 And granny tans his skin."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Oh, lawk ! what a calamity !  
 Oh, my ! what a calamity !  
 Oh, dear ! what a calamity !  
 Lost and forsaken be I.

I'm out of my senses, and naught will content me,  
 But pois'ning Poll Ady who helped circumvent me ;



Come, tell me the means, for no power shall prevent me ;  
Oh, give me revenge, or I die."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"Pause a while!  
Anon, anon!  
Give me time  
The stars to con.  
True love's course  
Shall yet run smooth;  
True shall prove  
The favor'd youth."

BLAKE, *as the Tinker.*

"Tink tink, a tink a tink,  
We'll work and then get tipsy, oh!  
Clink tink, on each chink,  
Our busy hammers ring.  
Tink tink, a tink a tink,  
How merry lives a gypsy, oh!  
Chanting and ranting;  
As happy as a king."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Joy! joy! all will end happily!  
Joy! joy! all will end happily!  
Joy! joy! all will end happily!  
Bill will be constant to I.  
Oh, thankee, good dame, here's my purse and  
my thimble;  
A fig for Poll Ady and fat Sukey Wimble,  
I now could jump over the steeple so nimble;  
With joy I be ready to cry."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"William shall  
Be rich and great;  
And shall prove  
A constant mate.

Thank not me,  
But thank your fate,  
On whose high  
Decrees I wait."

"Well, wont that do? wont it bring the house down? I'm going to send for dresses from London, and we'll start next week."

"What, on the tramp, singing these songs?"

"Yes; we'll begin in some out-of-the-way place till we get used to it."

"And end in the lock-up, I should say," said Tom; "it'll be a good lark, though. Now, you haven't told me how you got home."

"Oh! we left camp at about five —"

"The tinker having extracted a sovereign from Drysdale," interrupted Blake.

"What did you give to the little gypsy yourself?" retorted Drysdale; "I saw your adieus under the thorn-bush. — Well, we got on all right to old Murdoch's, at Kingston Inn, by about seven, and there we had dinner; and after dinner the old boy came in; he and I are great chums, for I'm often there and always ask him in. But that beggar Blake, who never saw him before, cut me clean out in five minutes. Fancy his swearing he is Scotch, and that an ancestor of his in the sixteenth century married a Murdoch!"

"Well, when you come to think what a lot of ancestors one must have had at that time, it's probably true," said Blake.

"At any rate, it took," went on Drysdale. "I thought old Murdoch would have wept on his neck. As it was, he scattered snuff enough to fill a pint pot over him out of his mull, and began talking Gaelic. And Blake had

the cheek to jabber a lot of gibberish back to him, as if he understood every word."

"Gibberish! it was the purest Gaelic," said Blake, laughing.

"I heard a lot of Greek words myself," said Drysdale; "but old Murdoch was too pleased at hearing his own clapper going, and too full of whiskey, to find him out."

"Let alone that I doubt whether he remembers more than about five words of his native tongue himself," said Blake.

"The old boy got so excited that he went up-stairs for his plaid and dirk, and dressed himself up in them, apologizing that he could not appear in the full garb of old Gaul, in honor of his new-found relative, as his daughter had cut up his old kilt for 'trews for the bairnies' during his absence from home. Then they took to more toddy and singing Scotch songs, till at eleven o'clock they were standing on their chairs, right hands clasped, each with one foot on the table, glasses in the other hands, the toddy flying over the room as they swayed about, roaring like maniacs, what was it? — oh! I have it.

"*'Wug-an-toorey all agree,*

*'Wug-an-toorey, wug-an-toorey.'*"

"He hasn't told you that he tried to join us, and tumbled over the back of his chair into the dirty-plate basket."

"A libel! a libel!" shouted Drysdale; "the leg of my chair broke, and I stepped down gracefully and safely, and when I looked up and saw what a tottery performance it was, I concluded to give them a wide berth. It would be no joke to have old Murdoch topple over on to you. I left them '*wug-an-tooreying,*' and went out to look after the trap, which was ordered to be at the door at half-past ten. I found Murdock's ostler very drunk, but sober, compared with that rascally help whom we had been fools

enough to take with us. They had got the trap out and the horses in, but that old rascal, Satan, was standing so quiet that I suspected something wrong. Sure enough, when I came to look, they had him up to the cheek on one side of his mouth, and third bar on the other, his belly-band buckled across his back, and no kicking strap. The old brute was chuckling to himself what he would do with us as soon as we had started in that trim. It took half an hour getting all right, as I was the only one able to do any thing."

"Yes, you would have said so," said Blake, "if you had seen him trying to put Jack up behind. He made six shots with the old dog, and dropped him about on his head and the broad of his back as if he had been a bundle of eels."

"The fact is, that that rascally ostler had made poor old Jack drunk too," explained Drysdale, "and he wouldn't be lifted straight. However, we got off at last, and hadn't gone a mile before the help (who was maundering away some cursed sentimental ditty or other behind) lurched more heavily than usual, and pitched off into the night, somewhere. Blake looked for him for half an hour, and couldn't find a hair of him."

"You don't mean to say the man tumbled off and you never found him?" said Tom, in horror.

"Well, that's about the fact," said Drysdale; "but it aint so bad as you think. We had no lamps, and it was an uncommon bad night for running by holloas."

"But a firstrate night for running by scent," broke in Blake; "the fellow leant against me until he made his exit, and I'd have backed myself to have hit the scent again half a mile off, if the wind had only been right."

"He may have broken his neck," said Tom.

"Can a fellow sing with a broken neck?" said Drys-



dale ; "hanged if I know ! But don't I tell you we heard him maundering on somewhere or other ? and, when Blake shouted, he answered in endearing terms ; and, when Blake swore, he rebuked him piously out of the pitch darkness, and told him to go home and repent. I nearly dropped off the box for laughing at them ; and then he 'up-lifted his testimony,' as he called it, against me for driving a horse called Satan. I believe he's a ranting Methodist spouter."

"I tried hard to find him," said Blake, "for I should dearly have liked to have kicked him safely into the ditch."

"At last, Black Will himself couldn't have held Satan another minute. So Blake scrambled up, and away we came, and knocked into college at one for a finish : the rest you know."

"Well, you've had a pretty good day of it," said Tom, who had been hugely amused ; "but I should feel nervous about the help, if I were you."

"Oh ! he'll come to no grief, I'll be bound," said Drysdale ; "but what o'clock is it ?"

"Three," said Blake, looking at his watch and getting up ; "time to turn in."

"The first time I ever heard you say that," said Drysdale.

"Yes ; but you forgot we were up this morning before the world was aired. Good-night, Brown."

And off the two went, leaving Tom to sport his oak this time and retire in wonder to bed.

Drysdale was asleep with Jack curled up on the foot of the bed in ten minutes. Blake, by the help of wet towels and a knotted piece of whipcord round his forehead, read Pindar till the chapel bell began to ring.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN EXPLOSION.

OUR hero soon began to feel that he was contracting his first serious college friendship. The great, strong, badly dressed, badly appointed servitor, who seemed almost at the same time utterly reckless of and nervously alive to the opinion of all around him, with his bursts of womanly tenderness and Berserkir rage, alternating like the storms and sunshine of a July day on a high moorland, his keen sense of humor and appreciation of all the good things of this life, the use and enjoyment of which he was so steadily denying himself from high principle, had from the first seized powerfully on all Tom's sympathies, and was daily gaining more hold upon him.

Blessed is the man who has the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, I take it, the power of going out of one's self, and seeing and appreciating whatever is noble and living (in St. Paul's sense) in another man.

But even to him who has the gift, it is often a great puzzle to find out whether a man is really a friend or not. The following is recommended as a test in the case of any man about whom you are not quite sure, especially if he should happen to have more of this world's goods, either in the shape of talents, rank, money, or what not, than you :—

Fancy the man stripped stark naked of every thing in the world except an old pair of trousers and a shirt, for

decency's sake, without even a name to him, and dropped down in the middle of Holborn or Piccadilly. Would you go up to him then and there, and lead him out from amongst the cabs and omnibuses, and take him to your own home, and feed him, and clothe him, and stand by him against all the world, to your last sovereign and your last leg of mutton? If you wouldn't do this, you have no right to call him by the sacred name of friend. If you would, the odds are that he would do the same by you, and you may count yourself a rich man. For I reckon that, were friendship expressible by, or convertible into, current coin of the realm, one such friend would be worth to a man at least £100,000. How many millionnaires are there in England? I can't even guess; but more by a good many, I fear, than there are men who have ten real friends. But friendship is not so expressible or convertible. It is more precious than wisdom; and wisdom "cannot be gotten for gold, nor shall rubies be mentioned in comparison thereof." Not all the riches that ever came out of earth and sea are worth the assurance of one such real, abiding friendship in your heart of hearts.

But for the worth of a friendship, commonly so called — meaning thereby a sentiment founded on the good dinners, good stories, opera stalls, and days' shooting you have gotten or hope to get out of a man, the snug things in his gift, and his powers of procuring enjoyment of one kind or another to your miserable body or intellect — why, such a friendship as that is to be appraised easily enough if you find it worth your while; but you'll have to pay your pound of flesh for it one way or another, you may take your oath of that. If you follow my advice, you will take a £10 note down, and retire to your crust of bread and liberty.

So, as I was saying, Tom was rapidly falling into friend-

ship with Hardy. He was not bound hand and foot and carried away captive till some months later; but he was already getting deeper in the toils.

One evening he found himself as usual at Hardy's door about eight o'clock. The oak was open, but he got no answer when he knocked at the inner door. Nevertheless, he entered, having quite got over all shyness or ceremony by this time. The room was empty; but two tumblers and the black bottle stood on the table, and the kettle was hissing away on the hob. "Ah," thought Tom, "he expects me, I see." So he turned his back to the fire, and made himself at home. A quarter of an hour passed, and still Hardy did not return. "Never knew him out so long before at this time of night," thought Tom. "Perhaps he's at some party. I hope so. It would do him a deal of good; and I know he might go out if he liked. Next term see if I wont make him more sociable. It's a stupid custom that freshmen don't give parties in their first term, or I'd do it at once. Why wont he be more sociable? No, after all, sociable isn't the word; he's a very sociable fellow at bottom. What in the world is it that he wants?" And so Tom balanced himself on the two hind legs of one of the Windsor chairs, and betook himself to pondering what it was exactly which ought to be added to Hardy to make him an unexceptionable object of hero-worship; when the man himself came suddenly into the room, slamming his oak behind him, and casting his cap and gown fiercely on to the sofa, before he noticed our hero.

Tom jumped up at once. "My dear fellow, what's the matter?" he said. "I'm sorry I came in. Shall I go?"

"No; don't go. Sit down," said Hardy, abruptly; and then began to smoke fast without saying another word.

Tom waited a few minutes, watching him, and then broke silence again.



"I am sure something is the matter, Hardy. You look dreadfully put out; what is it?"

"What is it?" said Hardy, bitterly; "oh! nothing at all, nothing at all; a gentle lesson to servitors as to the duties of their position; not pleasant, perhaps, for a youngster to swallow, but I ought to be used to such things at any rate by this time. I beg your pardon for seeming put out."

"Do tell me what it is," said Tom. "I'm sure I am very sorry for any thing which annoys you."

"I believe you are," said Hardy, looking at him, "and I'm much obliged to you for it. What do you think of that fellow Chanter's offering Smith, the junior servitor, a boy just come up, a bribe of ten pounds to prick him in at chapel when he isn't there?"

"The dirty blackguard," said Tom; "by Jove he ought to be cut. He will be cut, wont he? You don't mean that he really did offer him the money?"

"I do," said Hardy; "and the poor little fellow came here after hall to ask me what he should do, with tears in his eyes."

"Chanter ought to be horsewhipped in quad," said Tom. "I will go and call on Smith directly. What did you do?"

"Why, as soon as I could master myself enough not to lay hands on him," said Hardy, "I went across to his rooms, where he was entertaining a select party, and just gave him his choice between writing an abject apology then and there, to my dictation, or having the whole business laid before the principal to-morrow morning. He chose the former alternative, and I made him write such a letter as I don't think he will forget in a hurry."

"That's good," said Tom; "but he ought to have been

horsewhipped, too. It makes one's fingers itch to think of it. However, Smith's all right now."

"All right!" said Hardy, bitterly. "I don't know what you call 'all right.' Probably the boy's self-respect is hurt for life. You can't salve over this sort of thing with an apology plaster."

"Well, I hope it isn't so bad as that," said Tom.

"Wait till you've tried it yourself," said Hardy. "I'll tell you what it is, one or two things of this sort — and I've seen many more than that in my time — sink down into you, and leave marks like a red-hot iron."

"But, Hardy, now, really, did you ever know a bribe offered before?" said Tom.

Hardy thought for a moment. "No," he said, "I can't say that I have; but things as bad, or nearly as bad, often." He paused a minute, and then went on: "I tell you, if it were not for my dear old father, who would break his heart over it, I would cut the whole concern to-morrow. I've been near doing it twenty times, and enlisting in a good regiment."

"Would it be any better there, though?" said Tom, gently, for he felt that he was in a magazine.

"Better! yes, it must be better," said Hardy; "at any rate, the youngsters there are marchers and fighters; besides, one would be in the ranks and know one's place. Here one is by way of being a gentleman — God save the mark! A young officer, be he never such a fop or profligate, must take his turn at guard, and carry his life in his hand all over the world, wherever he is sent, or he has to leave the service. Service! yes, that's the word; that's what makes every young red-coat respectable, though he mayn't think it. He is serving his queen, his country — the Devil, too, perhaps — very likely — but still the other in some sort. He is bound to it, sworn to it, must

do it, more or less. But a youngster up here, with health, strength, and heaps of money, bound to no earthly service, and choosing that of the Devil and his own lusts, because some service or other he must have — I want to know where else under the sun you can see such a sight as that?"

Tom mumbled something to the effect that it was by no means necessary that men at Oxford, either rich or poor, need embark in the service which he had alluded to; which remark, however, only seemed to add fuel to the fire; for Hardy now rose from his chair and began striding up and down the room, his right arm behind his back, the hand gripping his left elbow, his left hand brought round in front close to his body, and holding the bowl of his pipe, from which he was blowing off clouds in puffs, like an engine just starting with a heavy train. The attitude was one of a man painfully trying to curb himself. His eyes burnt like coals under his deep brows. The man altogether looked awful, and Tom felt particularly uncomfortable and puzzled. After a turn or two, Hardy burst out again: —

"And who are they, I should like to know, these fellows who dare to offer bribes to gentlemen? How do they live? What do they do for themselves or for this university? By Heaven! they are ruining themselves body and soul, and making this place, which was meant for the training of learned and brave and righteous Englishmen, a lie and a snare. And who tries to stop them? Here and there a don is doing his work like a man; the rest are either washing their hands of the business, and spending their time in looking after those who don't want looking after, and cramming those who would be better without the cramming, or else standing by, cap in hand, and shouting, 'O young men of large fortune and great

connections! you future dispensers of the good things of this realm! come to our colleges, and all shall be made pleasant!’ and the shout is taken up by undergraduates, and tradesmen, and horse-dealers, and cricket-cads, and dog-fanciers, ‘Come to us, and us, and us, and we will be your toadies!’ Let them, let them toady and cringe to their precious idols, till they bring this noble old place down about their ears. Down it will come, down it must come, for down it ought to come, if it can find nothing better to worship than rank, money, and intellect. But to live in the place and love it, too, and see all this going on, and groan and writhe under it, and not be able—”

At this point in his speech, Hardy came to the turning-point in his march at the further end of the room, just opposite his crockery cupboard; but, instead of turning as usual, he paused, let go the hold on his left elbow, poised himself for a moment to get a purchase, and then dashed his right fist full against one of the panels. Crash went the slight deal boards, as if struck with a sledge-hammer, and crash went glass and crockery behind. Tom jumped to his feet; in doubt whether an assault on him would not follow; but the fit was over, and Hardy looked round at him, with a rueful and deprecating face. For a moment Tom tried to look solemn and heroic, as befitted the occasion; but, somehow, the sudden contrast flashed on him, and sent him off, before he could think about it, into a roar of laughter, ending in a violent fit of coughing; for in his excitement he had swallowed a mouthful of smoke. Hardy, after holding out for a moment, gave in to the humor of the thing, and the appealing look passed into a smile, and the smile into a laugh, as he turned towards his damaged cupboard, and began opening it carefully in a legitimate manner.



"I say, old fellow," said Tom, coming up, "I should think you must find it an expensive amusement; do you often walk into your cupboards like that?"

"You see, Brown, I'm naturally a man of a very quick temper."

"So it seems," said Tom; "but doesn't it hurt your knuckles? I should have something softer put up for me if I were you; your bolster, with a velvet cap on it, or a doctor of divinity's gown now."

"You be hanged," said Hardy, as he disengaged the last splinter, and gently opened the ill-used cupboard door. "Oh, thunder and turf, look here!" he went on, as the state of affairs inside disclosed itself to his view; "how many times have I told that thief George never to put any thing on this side of my cupboard! Two tumblers smashed to bits, and I've only four in the world! Lucky we'd got those two out on the table."

"And here's a great piece out of the sugar basin, you see," said Tom, holding up the broken article; "and, let me see, one cup, and three saucers gone to glory."

"Well, it's lucky it's no worse," said Hardy, peering over his shoulder; "I had a lot of odd saucers, and there's enough left to last my time. Never mind the smash, let's sit down again and be reasonable."

Tom sat down in high good-humor. He felt himself more on an equality with his host than he had done before, and even thought he might venture on a little mild expostulation or lecturing. But while he was considering how to improve the occasion, Hardy began himself.

"I shouldn't get so furious, Brown, if I didn't care about the place so much. I can't bear to think of it as a sort of learning machine in which I am to grind for three years to get certain degrees which I want. No—

this place, and Cambridge, and our great schools are the heart of dear old England. Did you ever read Secretary Cook's address to the vice-chancellor, doctors, etc., in 1636—more critical times, perhaps, even than ours? No? Well listen, then;" and he went to his bookcase, took down a book, and read, "'The very truth is, that all wise princes respect the welfare of their estates, and consider that schools and universities are (as in the body) the noble and vital parts, which, being vigorous and sound, send good blood and active spirits into the veins and arteries, which cause health and strength; or, if feeble or ill-affected, corrupt all the vital parts; whereupon grow diseases, and in the end, death itself.' A low standard up here for ten years may corrupt half the parishes in the kingdom."

"That's true," said Tom, but — "

"Yes; and so one has a right to be jealous for Oxford. Every Englishman ought to be."

"But I really think, Hardy, that you're unreasonable," said Tom, who had no mind to be done out of his chance of lecturing his host.

"I'm very quick-tempered," said Hardy, "as I told you just now."

"But you're not fair on the fast set up here. They can't help being rich men, after all."

"No; so one oughtn't to expect them to be going through the eyes of needles, I suppose. But do you mean to say you ever heard of a more dirty blackguard business than this?" said Hardy; "he ought to be expelled the university."

"I admit that," said Tom; "but it was only one of them, you know. I don't believe there's another man in the set who would have done it."

"Well, I hope not," said Hardy; "I may be hard on them—as you say, they can't help being rich. But now, I don't want you to think me a violent, one-sided fanatic; shall I tell you some of my experiences up here—some passages from the life of a servitor?"

"Do," said Tom; "I should like nothing so well."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HARDY'S HISTORY.

ON the whole, I think it will put my readers in a better position for understanding my story, if I take this early opportunity of making them better acquainted with Hardy. So I have put together at once a connected sketch of his life, which Tom picked up bit by bit from him, on the night of the broken cupboard and afterwards, as their friendship went on ripening; and as it is always best to let a man speak for himself, Hardy shall tell his own tale, without comment. So let us fancy ourselves in the room described in Chapter V., sitting in a Windsor chair, on the opposite side of the fire to Hardy, and bent with our whole wills on knowing, understanding, throwing ourselves into the life of, and sympathizing with, the strange granite block of humanity, who sits in the fellow Windsor chair, and speaks as follows:—

“My father is an old commander in the Royal Navy. He was a second cousin of Nelson’s Hardy, and that, I believe, was what led him into the navy, for he had no interest whatever of his own. It was a visit which Nelson’s Hardy, then a young lieutenant, paid to his relative, my grandfather, which decided my father, he has told me; but he always had a strong bent to the sea, though he was a boy of very studious habits.

“However, those were times when brave men who knew and loved their profession couldn’t be overlooked, and my dear old father fought his way up step by step—



not very fast certainly, but still fast enough to keep him in heart about his chances in life. I could show you the accounts of some of the affairs he was in in James' History, which you see up on my shelf there, or I could tell them you myself; but I hope some day you will know him, and then you will hear them in perfection.

"My father was made commander towards the end of the war, and got a ship in which he sailed with a convoy of merchantmen from Bristol. It was the last voyage he ever made in active service; but the admiralty were so well satisfied with his conduct in it that they kept his ship in commission two years after peace was declared. And well they might be, for in the Spanish main he fought an action which lasted, on and off, for two days, with a French sloop-of-war, and a privateer, which he always thought was an American, either of which ought to have been a match for him. But he had been with Vincent in the *Arrow*, and was not likely to think much of such small odds as that. At any rate, he beat them off, and not a prize could either of them make out of his convoy, though I believe his ship was never fit for any thing afterwards, and was broken up as soon as she was out of commission. We have got her compasses, and the old flag which flew at the peak through the whole voyage, at home now. It was my father's own flag, and his fancy to have it always flying. More than half the men were killed, or badly hit—the dear old father amongst the rest. A ball took off part of his knee-cap, and he had to fight the last six hours of the action sitting in a chair on the quarter-deck; but he says it made the men fight better than when he was about among them, seeing him sitting there sucking oranges.

"Well, he came home with a stiff leg. The Bristol merchants gave him the freedom of the city in a gold box,

and a splendidly mounted sword with an inscription on the blade, which hangs over the mantelpiece at home. When I first left home, I asked him to give me his old service sword, which used to hang by the other, and he gave it me at once, though I was only a lad of seventeen, as he would give me his right eye, dear old father, which is the only one he has now ; the other he lost from a cutlass-wound in a boarding party. There it hangs, and those are his epaulettes in the tin case. They used to lie under my pillow before I had a room of my own, and many a cowardly, down-hearted fit have they helped to pull me through, Brown ; and many a mean act have they helped to hinder me from doing. There they are always ; and the sight of them brings home the dear old man to me as nothing else does, hardly even his letters. I must be a great scoundrel to go very wrong with such a father.

“ Let’s see — where was I ? Oh, yes ! I remember. Well, my father got his box and sword, and some very handsome letters from several great men. We have them all in a book at home, and I know them by heart. The ones he values most are from Collingwood, and his old captain, Vincent, and from his cousin, Nelson’s Hardy, who didn’t come off much better himself after the war than my father ; for my poor old father never got another ship. For some time he went up every year to London, and was always, he says, very kindly received by the people in power, and often dined with one and another lord of the admiralty who had been an old messmate. But he was longing for employment ; and it used to prey on him while he was in his prime to feel year after year slipping away, and he still without a ship. But why should I abuse people, and think it hard when he doesn’t ? ‘ You see, Jack,’ he said to me the last time

we spoke about it, 'after all, I was a battered old hulk, lame and half blind. So was Nelson, you'll say; but every man isn't a Nelson, my boy. And though I might think I could con or fight a ship as well as ever, I can't say other folk who didn't know me were wrong for not agreeing with me. Would you now, Jack, appoint a lame and blind man to command your ship, if you had one?' But he left off applying for work soon after he was fifty (I just remember the time), for he began to doubt then whether he was quite so fit to command a small vessel as a younger man; and, though he had a much better chance after that of getting a ship (for William IV. came to the throne, who knew all about him), he never went near the admiralty again. 'God forbid,' he said, 'that his majesty should take me if there's a better man to be had.'

"But I have forgotten to tell you how I came into the world, and am telling you my father's story instead of my own. You seem to like hearing about it though, and you can't understand one without the other. However, when my father was made commander, he married, and bought, with his prize money and savings, a cottage and piece of land, in a village on the south coast, where he left his wife when he went on his last voyage. They had waited some years, for neither of them had any money; but there never were two people who wanted it less, or did more good without it to all who came near them. They had a hard time of it, too, for my father had to go on half-pay; and a commander's half-pay isn't much to live upon and keep a family. For they had a family; three, besides me; but they are all gone. And my mother, too; she died when I was quite a boy, and left him and me alone; and since then I have never known what a woman's love is, for I have no near rela-

tions ; and a man with such prospects as mine had better keep down all — however, there's no need to go into my notions ; I wont wander any more if I can help it.

“ I know my father was very poor when my mother died, and I think (though he never told me so) that he had mortgaged our cottage, and was very near having to sell it at one time. The expenses of my mother's illness had been very heavy ; I know a good deal of the best furniture was sold — all, indeed, except a handsome arm-chair, and a little work-table of my mother's. She used to sit in the chair, in her last illness, on our lawn, and watch the sunsets. And he sat by her, and watched her, and sometimes read the Bible to her ; while I played about with a big black dog we had then, named Vincent, after my father's old captain ; or with Burt, his old boatswain, who came with his wife to live with my father before I can recollect, and lives with us still. He did every thing in the garden and about the house ; and in the house, too, when his wife was ill, for he can turn his hand to any thing, like most old salts. It was he who rigged up the mast and weathercock on the lawn, and used to let me run up the old flag on Sundays, and on my father's wedding-day, and on the anniversary of his action, and of Vincent's action in the *Arrow*.

“ After my mother's death my father sent away all the servants, for the boatswain and his wife are more like friends. I was wrong to say that no woman has loved me since my mother's death, for I believe dear old Nanny loves me as if I were her own child. My father, after this, used to sit silent for hours together, doing nothing but look over the sea ; but, except for that, was not much changed. After a short time he took to teaching me to read, and from that time I never was away from him for an hour, except when I was asleep, until I went out into the world.



“As I told you, my father was naturally fond of study. He had kept up the little Latin he had learnt as a boy, and had always been reading whatever he could lay his hands on; so that I couldn't have had a better tutor. They were no lessons to me, particularly the geography ones; for there was no part of the world's sea-coast that he did not know, and could tell me what it and the people who lived there were like; and often when Burt happened to come in at such times, and heard what my father was talking about, he would give us some of his adventures and ideas of geography, which were very queer indeed.

“When I was nearly ten, a new vicar came. He was about my father's age, and a widower, like him; only he had no child. Like him, too, he had no private fortune, and the living is a very poor one. He soon became very intimate with us, and made my father his church-warden; and, after being present at some of our lessons, volunteered to teach me Greek, which, he said, it was time I should begin to learn. This was a great relief to my father, who had bought a Greek grammar and dictionary, and a delectus, some time before; and I could see him often, dear old father, with his glass in his eye, puzzling away over them when I was playing or reading Cook's voyages, for it had grown up to be the wish of his heart that I should be a scholar, and should go into orders. So he was going to teach me Greek himself, for there was no one in the parish except the vicar who knew a word of any thing but English — so that he could not have got me a tutor, and the thought of sending me to school had never crossed his mind, even if he could have afforded to do either. My father only sat by at the Greek lessons, and took no part; but first he began to put in a word here and there, and then would repeat words and sentences

himself, and look over my book while I construed, and very soon was just as regular a pupil of the vicar as I.

“The vicar was for the most part very proud of his pupils, and the kindest of masters; but every now and then he used to be hard on my father, which made me furious, though he never seemed to mind it. I used to make mistakes on purpose at those times to show that I was worse than he, at any rate. But this only happened after we had had a political discussion at dinner; for we dined at three, and took to our Greek afterwards, to suit the vicar’s time, who was generally a guest. My father is a Tory, of course, as you may guess, and the vicar was a Liberal, of a very mild sort, as I have since thought; ‘a Whig of ’88,’ he used to call himself. But he was in favor of the Reform Bill, which was enough for my father, who lectured him about loyalty, and opening the floodgates to revolution; and used to call up old Burt from the kitchen, where he was smoking his pipe, and ask him what he used to think of the Radicals on board ship; and Burt’s regular reply was,—

“‘Skulks, yer honor, regular skulks. I wouldn’t give the twist of a fiddler’s elbow for all the lot of ’em as ever pretended to handle a swab, or hand a topsail.’

“The vicar always tried to argue, but, as Burt and I were the only audience, my father was always triumphant; only he took it out of us afterwards at the Greek. Often I used to think, when they were reading history, and talking about the characters, that my father was much the most liberal of the two.

“About this time he bought a small, half-decked boat of ten tons, for he and Burt agreed that I ought to learn to handle a boat, although I was not to go to sea; and when they got the vicar in the boat on the summer evenings (for he was always ready for a sail, though he was a very

bad sailor), I believe they used to steer as near the wind as possible, and get into short chopping seas on purpose. But I don't think he was ever frightened, though he used sometimes to be very ill.

“ And so I went on, learning all I could from my father, and the vicar, and old Burt, till I was sixteen. By that time I had begun to think for myself; and I had made up my mind that it was time I should do something. No boy ever wanted to leave home less, I believe; but I saw that I must make a move if I was ever to be what my father wished me to be. So I spoke to the vicar, and he quite agreed with me, and made inquiries amongst his acquaintance; and so, before I was seventeen, I was offered the place of under-master in a commercial school, about twenty miles from home. The vicar brought the offer, and my father was very angry at first; but we talked him over, and so I took the situation.

“ And I am very glad I did, although there were many drawbacks. The salary was £35 a year, and for that I had to drill all the boys in English, and arithmetic, and Latin, and to teach the Greek grammar to the five or six who paid extra to learn it. Out of school I had to be always with them, and was responsible for the discipline. It was weary work very often, and what seemed the worst part of it, at the time, to me was the trade spirit which leavened the whole of the establishment. The master and owner of the school, who was a keen, vulgar man, but always civil enough to me, thought of nothing but what would pay. And this seemed to be what filled the school. Fathers sent their boys, because the place was so practical, and nothing was taught (except as extras), which was not to be of so-called real use to the boys in the world. We had our work quite clearly laid down for us; and it was, not to put the boys in the way of getting

real knowledge or understanding, or any of the things Solomon talks about ; but to put them in the way of getting on.

“ I spent three years at that school, and in that time, I grounded myself pretty well in Latin and Greek — better, I believe, than I should have done if I had been at a first-rate school myself ; and I hope I did the boys some good, and taught some of them that cunning was not the best quality to start in life with. And I was not often very unhappy, for I could always look forward to my holidays with my father.

“ However, I own that I never was better pleased than one Christmas, when the vicar came over to our cottage, and brought with him a letter from the principal of St. Ambrose College, Oxford, appointing me to a servitorship. My father was even more delighted than I, and that evening produced a bottle of old rum, which was part of his ship's stock, and had gone all through his action, and been in his cellar ever since. And we three in the parlor, and old Burt and his wife in the kitchen, finished it that night ; the boatswain, I must own, taking the lion's share. The vicar took occasion, in the course of the evening, to hint that it was only poor men who took these places at the university ; and that I might find some inconvenience, and suffer some annoyance, by not being exactly in the same position as other men. But my dear old father would not hear of it ; I was now going to be amongst the very pick of English gentlemen — what could it matter whether I had money or not ? That was the last thing which real gentlemen thought of. Besides, why was I to be so very poor ? he should be able to allow me whatever would be necessary to make me comfortable. ‘ But, Jack,’ he said, suddenly, later in the evening, ‘ one meets low fellows everywhere. You have met them, I



know, often at that confounded school, and will meet them again. Never you be ashamed of your poverty, my boy.' I promised readily enough, for I didn't think I could be more tried in that way than I had been already. I had lived for three years amongst people whose class notoriously measured all things by a money standard; now that was all over, I thought. It's easy making promises in the dark. The vicar, however, would not let the matter rest; so we resolved ourselves into a committee of ways and means, and my father engaged to lay before us an exact statement of his affairs next day. I went to the door with the vicar, and he told me to come and see him in the morning.

"I half guessed what he wanted to see me for. He knew all my father's affairs perfectly well, and wished to prepare me for what was to come in the evening. 'Your father,' he said, 'is one of the most liberal men I have ever met; he is almost the only person who gives anything to the schools and other charities in this parish, and he gives to the utmost. You would not wish him, I know, to cut off these gifts, which bring the highest reward with them, when they are made in the spirit in which he makes them. Then he is getting old, and you would never like him to deny himself the comforts (and few enough they are) which he is used to. He has nothing but his half-pay, £—, a year to live on; and out of that he pays £— a year for insurance; for he has insured his life, that you may have something besides the cottage and land when he dies. I only tell you this, that you may know the facts beforehand. I am sure you would never take a penny from him if you could help it. But he won't be happy unless he makes you some allowance; and he can do it without crippling himself. He has been paying off an old mortgage on his property here for many years, by in-

stalments of £40 a year, and the last was paid last Michaelmas, so that it will not inconvenience him to make you that allowance. Now you will not be able to live properly upon that up at Oxford, even as a servitor. I speak to you now, my dear Jack, as your oldest friend (except Burt), and you must allow me the privilege of an old friend. I have more than I want, and I propose to make up your allowance at Oxford to £80 a year, and upon that I think you may manage to get on. Now, it will not be quite candid, but I think, under the circumstances, we shall be justified in representing to your father that £40 a year will be ample for him to allow you. You see what I mean?’

“I remember almost word for word what the vicar said, for it is not often in one’s life that one meets with this sort of friend. At first, I thanked him, but refused to take any thing from him. I had saved enough, I said, to carry me through Oxford. But he would not be put off; and I found that his heart was as much set on making me an allowance himself as on saving my father. So I agreed to take £25 a year from him.

“When we met again in the evening to hear my father’s statement, it was as good as a play to see the dear old man with his spectacles on, and his papers before him, proving in some wonderful way, and without making the least misstatement, that he could easily allow me at least £80 or £100 a year. I believe it cost the vicar some twinges of conscience to persuade him that all I should want would be £40 a year; and it was very hard work, but at last we succeeded, and it was so settled. During the next three weeks the preparations for my start occupied us all. The vicar looked out all his old classics, which he insisted that I should take. There they stand on that middle shelf—all well bound you see, and many

of them old college prizes. My father made an expedition to the nearest town, and came back with a large new portmanteau and hatbox, and the next day the leading tailor came over to fit me out with new clothes. In fact, if I had not resisted stoutly, I should have come to college with half the contents of the cottage, and Burt as a valet, for the old boatswain was as bad as the other two. But I compromised the matter with him by accepting his pocket compass, and the picture of the brig which hangs there; the two things, next to his old wife, which he values, I believe, most in the world.

“Well it is now two years last October since I came to Oxford as a servitor; so you see I have pretty nearly finished my time here. I was more than twenty then—much older, as you know, than most freshmen. I dare say it was partly owing to the difference in age, and partly to the fact that I knew no one when I came up, but mostly to my own bad management and odd temper, that I did not get on better than I have done with the men here. Sometimes I think that our college is a bad specimen, for I have made several friends amongst our out-college men. At any rate, the fact is, as you have no doubt found out,—and I hope I haven’t tried at all to conceal it,—that I am out of the pale, as it were. In fact, with the exception of one of the tutors, and one man who was a freshman with me, I do not know a man in college except as a mere speaking acquaintance.

“I had been rather thrown off my balance, I think, at the change in my life, for at first I made a great fool of myself. I had believed too readily what my father had said, and thought that at Oxford I should see no more of what I had been used to. Here I thought that the last thing a man would be valued by would be the length of his purse, and that no one would look down upon me be-

cause I performed some services to the college, in return for my keep, instead of paying for it in money.

“Yes, I made a great fool of myself, no doubt of that; and what is worse, I broke my promise to my father—I often *was* ashamed of my poverty, and tried at first to hide it, for somehow the spirit of the place carried me along with it. I couldn’t help wishing to be thought of and treated as an equal by the men. It’s a very bitter thing for a proud, shy, sensitive fellow, as I am by nature, to have to bear the sort of assumption and insolence one meets with. I furnished my rooms well, and dressed well. Ah! you may stare; but this is not the furniture I started with; I sold it all when I came to my senses, and put in this tumble-down second-hand stuff, and I have worn out my fine clothes. I know I’m not well dressed now. (Tom nodded ready acquiescence to this position.) Yes, though I still wince a little now and then—a good deal oftener than I like—I don’t carry any false colors. I can’t quite conquer the feeling of shame (for shame it is, I am afraid), but at any rate, I don’t try to hide my poverty any longer, I haven’t for these eighteen months. I have a grim sort of pleasure in pushing it in everybody’s face. (Tom assented with a smile, remembering how excessively uncomfortable Hardy had made him by this little peculiarity the first time he was in his rooms.) The first thing which opened my eyes a little was the conduct of the tradesmen. My bills all came in within a week of the delivery of the furniture and clothes; some of them wouldn’t leave the things without payment. I was very angry and vexed; not at the bills, for I had my savings, which were much more than enough to pay for every thing. But I knew that these same tradesmen never thought of asking for payment under a year, oftener two, from other men. Well, it was a lesson. Credit for gen-



flemen-commoners, ready-money dealings with servitors! I owe the Oxford tradesmen much for that lesson. If they would only treat every man who comes up as a servitor, it would save a deal of misery.

“My cure was completed by much higher folk, though. I can’t go through the whole treatment, but will give you a specimen or two of the doses, giving precedence (as is the way here) to those administered by the highest in rank. I got them from all sorts of people, but none did me more good than the lords’ pills. Amongst other ways of getting on, I took to sparring, which was then very much in vogue. I am a good hand at it, and very fond of it, so that it wasn’t altogether flunkeyism, I’m glad to think. In my second term two or three fighting men came down from London, and gave a benefit at the weirs. I was there, and set to with one of them. We were well matched, and both of us did our very best; and when we had had our turn we drew down the house, as they say. Several young tufts and others of the faster men came up to me afterwards and complimented me. They did the same by the professional, but it didn’t occur to me at the time that they put us both in the same category.

“I am free to own that I was really pleased two days afterwards, when a most elaborate flunkey brought a card to my door inscribed, ‘The Viscount Philippine, Ch. Ch., at home to-night, eight o’clock — sparring.’ Luckily, I made a light dinner, and went sharp to time into Christ Church. The porter directed me to the noble viscount’s rooms; they were most splendid certainly — first-floor rooms in Peckwater. I was shown into the large room, which was magnificently furnished and lighted. A good space was cleared in the centre; there were all sorts of bottles and glasses on the sideboard. There might have been twelve or fourteen men present, almost all in tufts or

gentlemen-commoners' caps. One or two of our college I recognized. The fighting-man was also there, stripped for sparring, which none of the rest were. It was plain that the sport had not begun; I think he was doing some trick of strength as I came in. My noble host came forward with a nod, and asked me if I would take any thing, and, when I declined, said, 'Then will you put on the gloves?' I looked at him rather surprised, and thought it an odd way to treat the only stranger in his own rooms. However, I stripped, put on the gloves, and one of the others came forward to tie them for me. While he was doing it I heard my host say to the man, 'A five-pound note, mind, if you do it within the quarter of an hour.' 'Only half-minute time then, my lord,' he answered. The man who was tying my gloves said, in a low voice, 'Be steady, don't give him a chance to knock you down.' It flashed across me in a moment now why I was there; but it was too late to draw back, so we stood up and began sparring. I played very steadily and light at first, to see whether my suspicions were well founded, and in two minutes I was satisfied. My opponent tried every dodge to bring on a rally, and when he was foiled, I could see that he was shifting his glove. I stopped and insisted that his gloves should be tied, and then we went on again.

"I kept on the defensive. The man was in bad training, and luckily I had the advantage by an inch or so in length of arm. Before five minutes were over, I had caught enough of the bystanders' remarks to know that my noble host had betted a pony that I should be knocked down in a quarter of an hour. My one object now was to make him lose his money. My opponent did his utmost for his patron, and fairly winded himself in his efforts to get at me. He had to call time twice himself. I said

not a word ; my turn would come, I knew, if I could keep on my legs, and of this I had little fear. I held myself together, made no attack, and my length of arm gave me the advantage in every counter. It was all I could do, though, to keep clear of his rushes as the time drew on. On he came, time after time, careless of guarding, and he was full as good a man as I. 'Time's up ; it's past the quarter.' 'No, by Jove, half a minute yet ; now's your time,' said my noble host to his man, who answered by a last rush. I met him as before, with a steady counter ; but this time, by good luck, my blow got home under his chin, and he staggered, lost his footing, and went fairly over on to his back.

"Most of the bystanders seemed delighted, and some of them hurried towards me. But I tore off the gloves, flung them on the ground, and turned to my host. I could hardly speak, but I made an effort, and said, quickly, 'You have brought a stranger to your rooms, and have tried to make him fight for your amusement ; now I tell you it is a blackguard act of yours — an act which no gentleman would have done.' My noble host made no remark. I threw on my coat and waistcoat, and then turned to the rest and said, '*Gentlemen* would not have stood by and seen it done.' I went up to the sideboard, uncorked a bottle of champagne, and half filled a tumbler before a word was spoken. Then one of the visitors stepped forward and said, 'Mr. Hardy, I hope you wont go ; there has been a mistake ; we did not know of this. I am sure many of us are very sorry for what has occurred ; stay and look on, we will all of us spar.' I looked at him, and then at my host, to see whether the latter joined in the apology. Not he ; he was doing the dignified sulky, and most of the rest seemed to me to be with him. 'Will any of you spar with me ?' I said, tauntingly ; tossing off

the champagne. 'Certainly,' the new speaker said directly, 'if you wish it, and are not too tired. I will spar with you myself; you will, wont you, James?' and he turned to one of the other men. If any of them had backed him by a word I should probably have stayed. Several of them, I learnt afterwards, would have liked to have done so, but it was an awkward scene to interfere in. I stopped a moment, and then said, with a sneer: 'You're too small, and none of the other gentlemen seem inclined to offer.'

"I saw that I had hurt him, and felt pleased at the moment that I had done so. I was now ready to start, and I could not think of any thing more unpleasant to say at the moment; so I went up to my antagonist, who was standing with the gloves on still, not quite knowing what to be at, and held out my hand. - 'I can shake hands with you, at any rate,' I said; 'you only did what you were paid for in the regular way of business, and you did your best.' He looked rather sheepish, but held out his gloved hand, which I shook. 'Now I have the honor to wish you all a very good evening;' and so I left the place and got home to my own rooms, and sat down there with several new ideas in my head. On the whole, the lesson was not a very bitter one, for I felt that I had had the best of the game. The only thing I really was sorry for, was my own insolence to the man who had come forward as a peacemaker. I had remarked his face before. I don't know how it is with you, but I can never help looking at a tuft—the gold tassel draws one's eyes somehow: and then it's an awful position, after all, for mere boys to be placed in. So I knew his face before that day, though I had only seen him two or three times in the street. Now it was much more clearly impressed on my mind; and I called it up and looked it over, half hoping that I should



detect something to justify me to myself, but without success. However, I got the whole affair pretty well out of my head by bedtime.

"While I was at breakfast the next morning, my scout came in with a face of the most ludicrous importance, and quite a deferential manner. I declare I don't think he has ever got back since that day to his original free-and-easy swagger. He laid a card on my table, paused a moment, and then said, 'His ludship is houtside waitin', sir.'

"I had had enough of lords' cards; and the scene of yesterday rose painfully before me as I threw the card into the fire without looking at it, and said, 'Tell him I am engaged.'

"My scout, with something like a shudder at my audacity, replied, 'His ludship told me to say, sir, as his bis'-ness was very particular, so hif you was engaged he would call again in half an hour.'

" 'Tell him to come in, then, if he wont take a civil hint.' I felt sure who it would be, but hardly knew whether to be pleased or annoyed, when in another minute the door opened, and in walked the peacemaker. I don't know which of us was most embarrassed; he walked straight up to me without lifting his eyes, and held out his hand, saying, 'I hope, Mr. Hardy, you will shake hands with me now.'

" 'Certainly, my lord,' I said, taking his hand. 'I am sorry for what I said to you yesterday, when my blood was up.'

" 'You said no more than we deserved,' he answered, twirling his cap by the long gold tassel; 'I could not be comfortable without coming to assure you again myself, that neither I, nor, I believe, half the men in Philippine's

rooms yesterday, knew any thing of the bet. I really cannot tell you how annoyed I have been about it.'

"I assured him that he might make himself quite easy, and then remained standing, expecting him to go, and not knowing exactly what to say further. But he begged me to go on with my breakfast, and sat down, and then asked me to give him a cup of tea, as he had not breakfasted. So in a few minutes we were sitting opposite one another, over tea and bread and butter, for he didn't ask for and I didn't offer any thing else. It was rather a trying meal, for each of us was doing all he could to make out the other. I only hope I was as pleasant as he was. After breakfast he went, and I thought the acquaintance was probably at an end; he had done all that a gentleman need have done, and had wellnigh healed a raw place in my mental skin.

"But I was mistaken. Without intruding himself on me, he managed somehow or another to keep on building up the acquaintance little by little. For some time I looked out very jealously for any patronizing airs, and even after I was convinced that he had nothing of the sort in him, avoided him as much as I could, though he was the most pleasant and best-informed man I knew. However, we became intimate, and I saw a good deal of him, in a quiet way, at his own rooms. I wouldn't go to his parties, and asked him not to come to me here, for my horror of being thought a tuft hunter had become almost a disease. He was not so old as I, but he was just leaving the university, for he had come up early, and lords' sons are allowed to go out in two years, — I suppose because the authorities think they will do less harm here in two than in three years; — but it is somewhat hard on poor men, who have to earn their bread, to see such a privilege given to those who want it least. When he left,

he made me promise to go and pay him a visit — which I did in the long vacation, at a splendid place up in the north, and enjoyed myself more than I care to own. His father, who is quite worthy of his son, and all his family, were as kind as people could be. Well, amongst other folk, I met there a young sprig of nobility, who was coming up here the next term. He had been brought up abroad, and I suppose knew very few men of his own age in England. Well, he was not a bad style of boy, but rather too demonstrative, and not strong headed. He took to me wonderfully, was delighted to hear that I was up at Oxford, and talked constantly of how much we should see of one another. As it happened, I was almost the first man he met when he got off the coach at the ‘Angel,’ at the beginning of his first term. He almost embraced me, and nothing would serve but I must dine with him at the inn, and we spent the evening together, and parted dear friends. Two days afterwards we met in the street; he was with two other youngsters, and gave me a polished and distant bow. In another week he passed me as if we had never met.

“I don’t blame him, poor boy. My only wonder is that any of them ever got through this place without being thoroughly spoilt. From vice-chancellor down to scout’s boy, the whole of Oxford seems to be in league to turn their heads, even if they come up with them set on straight, which toadying servants take care shall never happen if they can hinder it. The only men who would do them good up here, both dons and undergraduates, keep out of their way, very naturally. Gentlemen-commoners have a little better chance, though not much, and seem to me to be worse than the tufts, and to furnish most of their toadies.

“Well, are you tired of my railing? I dare say I am

rabid about it all. Only it does go to my heart to think what this place might be and what it is. I see I needn't give you any more of my experience.

"You'll understand, now, some of the things that have puzzled you about me. Oh! I know they did. You needn't look apologetic. I don't wonder, or blame you. I am a very queer bird for the perch I have lit on; I know that as well as anybody. The only wonder is that you ever took the trouble to try to lime me. Now have another glass of toddy. Why! it is near twelve. I must have one pipe, and turn in. No Aristophanes to-night."



## CHAPTER IX.

### A BROWN BAIT.

TOM's little exaltation in his own eyes consequent on the cupboard-smashing escapade of his friend was not to last long. Not a week had elapsed before he himself arrived suddenly in Hardy's room, in as furious a state of mind as the other had so lately been in, allowing for the difference of the men. Hardy looked up from his books, and exclaimed, —

“What's the matter? Where have you been to-night? You look fierce enough to sit for the portrait of Sanguinoso Volcanoni, the bandit.”

“Been,” said Tom, sitting down on the spare Windsor chair which he usually occupied, so hard as to make it crack again, — “been! I've been to a wine party at Hendon's. Do you know any of that set?”

“No; except Grey, who came into residence in the same term with me. We have been reading for degree together. You must have seen him here sometimes in the evenings.”

“Yes, I remember; the fellow with a stiff neck, who wont look you in the face.”

“Ay; but he is a sterling man at the bottom, I can tell you.”

“Well, he wasn't there. You don't know any of the rest?”

“No.”

“And never went to any of their parties?”

"No."

"You've had no loss, I can tell you," said Tom, pleased that the ground was clear for him; "I never was amongst such a set of waspish, dogmatical, overbearing fellows in my life."

"Why, what in the name of fortune have they been doing to you? How did you fall among such Philistines?"

"I'm such an easy fool, you see," said Tom; "I go off directly with any fellow that asks me; fast or slow, it's all the same. I never think twice about the matter, and, generally, I like all the fellows I meet, and enjoy every thing; but just catch me at another of their stuck-up wines, that's all!"

"But you wont tell me what's the matter."

"Well, I don't know why Hendon should have asked me. He can't think me a likely card for a convert, I should think. At any rate, he asked me to wine, and I went as usual. Every thing was in capital style (it don't seem to be any part of their creed, mind you, to drink bad wine), and awfully gentlemanly and decorous."

"Yes, that's aggravating, I admit. It would have been in better taste, of course, if they had been a little black-guard and indecorous. No doubt, too, one has a right to expect bad wine at Oxford. Well?"

Hardy spoke so gravely, that Tom had to look across at him for half a minute. Then he went on with a grin.

"There was a piano in one corner, and muslin curtains—I give you my word, muslin curtains, besides the stuff ones."

"You don't say so?" said Hardy; "put up, no doubt, to insult you. No wonder you looked so furious when you came in. Any thing else?"

"Let me see—yes—I counted three sorts of scents on the mantelpiece, besides eau de Cologne. But I could have stood it all well enough if it hadn't been for their talk. From one thing to another they got to cathedrals, and one of them called St. Paul's 'a disgrace to a Christian city.' I couldn't stand that, you know. I was always bred to respect St. Paul's; weren't you?"

"My education in that line was neglected," said Hardy, gravely; "and so you took up the cudgels for St. Paul's?"

"Yes; I plumped out that St. Paul's was the finest cathedral in England. You'd have thought I had said that lying was one of the cardinal virtues—one or two just treated me to a sort of pitying sneer, but my neighbors were down upon me with a vengeance. I stuck to my text though, and they drove me into saying I liked the Ratcliffe more than any building in Oxford; which I don't believe I do, now I come to think of it. So when they couldn't get me to budge for their talk, they took to telling me that everybody who knew any thing about church architecture was against me—of course, meaning that I knew nothing about it—for the matter of that, I don't mean to say that I do"—Tom paused; it had suddenly occurred to him that there might be some reason in the rough handling he had got.

"But what did you say to the authorities?" said Hardy, who was greatly amused.

"Said I didn't care a straw for them," said Tom; "there was no right or wrong in the matter, and I had as good a right to my opinion as Pugin—or whatever his name is—and the rest."

"What heresy!" said Hardy, laughing; "you caught it for that, I suppose?"

"Didn't I! They made such a noise over it, that the men at the other end of the table stopped talking (they were all freshmen at our end), and when they found what was up, one of the older ones took me in hand, and I got a lecture about the middle ages, and the monks. I said I thought England was well rid of the monks; and then we got on to Protestantism, and fasting, and apostolic succession, and passive obedience, and I don't know what all! I only know I was tired enough of it before coffee came; but I couldn't go, you know, with all of them on me at once; could I?"

"Of course not; you were like the six thousand unconquerable British infantry at Albuera. You held your position by sheer fighting, suffering fearful loss."

"Well," said Tom, laughing, for he had talked himself into good humor again, "I dare say I talked a deal of nonsense; and, when I come to think it over, a good deal of what some of them said had something in it. I should like to hear it again, quietly, but there were others sneering and giving themselves airs, and that puts a fellow's back up."

"Yes," said Hardy; "a good many of the weakest and vainest men who come up take to this sort of thing now. They can do nothing themselves, and get a sort of platform by going in for the High Church business from which to look down on their neighbors."

"That's just what I thought," said Tom; "they tried to push mother Church, mother Church, down my throat at every turn. I'm as fond of the Church as any of them, but I don't want to be jumping up on her back every minute, like a sickly chicken getting on the old hen's back to warm his feet whenever the ground is cold, and fancying himself taller than all the rest of the brood."



"You were unlucky," said Hardy; "there are some very fine fellows amongst them."

"Well, I haven't seen much of them," said Tom, "and I don't want to see any more, for it seems to me all a Gothic-mouldings and man-millinery business."

"You wont think so when you've been up a little longer," said Hardy, getting up to make tea, which operation he had hardly commenced, when a knock came at the door, and in answer to Hardy's "Come in," a slight, shy man appeared, who hesitated, and seemed inclined to go when he saw that Hardy was not alone.

"Oh! come in, and have a cup of tea, Grey. You know Brown, I think?" said Hardy, looking round from the fire, where he was filling his teapot, to watch Tom's reception of the new-comer.

Our hero took his feet down, drew himself up, and made a solemn bow, which Grey returned, and then sidled nervously on to a chair, and looked very uncomfortable. However, in another minute Hardy came to the rescue, and began pouring out the tea. He was evidently tickled at the idea of confronting Tom so soon with another of his enemies. Tom saw this, and put on a cool and majestic manner in consequence, which evidently increased the discomfort of Grey's seat, and kept Hardy on the edge of an abyss of laughter. In fact, he had to ease himself by talking of other indifferent matters, and laughing at nothing. Tom had never seen him in this sort of humor before, and couldn't help enjoying it, though he felt that it was partly at his own expense. However, when Hardy once just approached the subject of the wine party, Tom bristled up so quickly, and Grey looked so meekly wretched, though he knew nothing of what was coming, that Hardy suddenly changed the subject, and turning to Grey, said, —

"What have you been doing the last fortnight? You haven't been here once. I've been obliged to get on with my Aristotle without you."

"I'm very sorry, indeed; but I haven't been able to come," said Grey, looking sideways at Hardy, and then at Tom, who sat regarding the wall, supremely indifferent.

"Well, I've finished my ethics," said Hardy; "cant you come in to-morrow night to talk them over? I suppose you're through them, too?"

"No, really," said Grey, "I haven't been able to look at them since the last time I was here."

"You must take care," said Hardy; "the new examiners are all for science and history. It wont do for you to go in trusting to your scholarship."

"I hope to make it up in the Easter vacation," said Grey.

"You'll have enough to do, then," said Hardy. "But how is it you've dropped astern so?"

"Why, the fact is," said Grey, hesitatingly, "that the curate of St. Peter's has set up some night-schools, and wanted some help. So I have been doing what I could to help him; and really," looking at his watch, "I must be going; I only wanted to tell you how it was I didn't come now."

Hardy looked at Tom, who was taken rather aback by this announcement, and began to look less haughtily at the wall. He even condescended to take a short glance at his neighbor.

"It's unlucky," said Hardy; "but do you teach every night?"

"Yes," said Grey. "I used to do my science and history at night, you know; but I find that teaching takes so

much out of me, that I'm only fit for bed now. However, I'm so glad I've told you. I have wanted to do it for some time. And if you would let me come in for an hour directly after hall, instead of later, I think I could still manage that."

"Of course," said Hardy; "come when you like. But it's rather hard to take you away every night, so near the examinations."

"It is my own wish," said Grey. "I should have been very glad if it hadn't happened just now; but as it has, I must do the best I can."

"Well, but I should like to help you. Can't I take a night or two off your hands?"

"No!" said Tom, fired with a sudden enthusiasm; "it will be as bad for you, Hardy. It can't want much scholarship to teach there. Let me go. I'll take two nights a week, if you'll let me."

"Oh, thank you," said Grey; "but I don't know how my friend might like it. That is—I mean," he said, getting very red, "it's very kind of you, only I'm used to it; and—and they rely on me. But I really must go; good-night;" and Grey went off in confusion.

As soon as the door had fairly closed, Hardy could stand it no longer, and lay back in his chair laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. Tom, wholly unable to appreciate the joke, sat looking at him with perfect gravity.

"What can there be in your look, Brown," said Hardy, when he could speak again, "to frighten Grey so? Did you see what a fright he was in at once, at the idea of turning you into the night-schools? There must be some lurking Protestantism in your face somewhere, which I hadn't detected."

"I don't believe he was frightened at me a bit. He wouldn't have you either, remember," said Tom.

"Well, at any rate, that don't look as if it were all mere Gothic mouldings and man millinery, does it?" said Hardy.

Tom sipped his tea and considered.

"One can't help admiring him, do you know, for it," he said. "Do you think he is really thrown back now in his own reading by this teaching?"

"I'm sure of it. He is such a quiet fellow, that nothing else is likely to draw him off reading; and I can see that he doesn't get on as he used, day by day. Unless he makes it up somehow, he won't get his first."

"He don't seem to like the teaching work much," said Tom.

"Quite the contrary as far as I can see."

"Then it is a very fine thing of him," said Tom.

"And you retract your man-millinery dictum, so far as he is concerned?"

"Yes, that I do, heartily; but not as to the set in general."

"Well, they don't suit me either; but, on the whole, they are wanted, at any rate, in this college. Even the worst of them is making some sort of protest for self-denial and against self-indulgence, which is nowhere more needed than here."

"A nice sort of protest — muslin curtains, a piano, and thirty-four claret."

"Oh, you've no right to count Hendon among them; he has only a little hankering after mediævalism, and thinks the whole thing gentlemanly."

"I only know the whole clamjamfery of them were there, and didn't seem to protest much."



"Brown you're a bigot. I should never have thought you would have been so furious against any set of fellows. I begin to smell Arnold."

"No, you don't. He never spoke to me against anybody."

"Halloo! It was the Rugby atmosphere, then, I suppose. But I tell you they are the only men in this college who are making that protest, whatever their motives may be."

"What do you say to yourself, old fellow?"

"Nonsense! I never deny myself any pleasure that I can afford, if it isn't wrong in itself, and doesn't hinder any one else. I can tell you, I'm as fond of fine things and good living as you."

"*If* it isn't wrong, and you can afford it, and don't hurt anybody! Just so. Well, then, mustn't it be right for you to have? You wouldn't have it put under your nose, I suppose, just for you to smell at it, and let it alone?"

"Yes; I know all that. I've been over it all often enough, and there's truth in it. But, mind you, it's rather slippery ground, especially for a freshman. And there's a great deal to be said on the other side — I mean, for denying one's self just for the sake of the self-denial."

"Well, they don't deny themselves the pleasure of looking at a fellow, as if he were a Turk because he likes St. Paul's better than Westminster Abbey."

"How that snubbing you got at the ecclesiological wine party seems to rankle — There, now! don't bristle up like a hedgehog. I'll never mention that unfortunate wine again. I saw the eight come in to-day. You are keeping much better time; but there is a weak place or two forward."

"Yes," said Tom, delighted to change the subject; "I

find it awfully hard to pull up to Jervis' stroke. Do you think I shall ever get to it?"

"Of course you will. Why, you have only been pulling behind him a dozen times or so, and his is the most trying stroke on the river. You quicken a little on it; but I didn't mean you. Two and five are the blots in the boat."

"You think so?" said Tom, much relieved. "So does Miller, I can see. It's so provoking — Drysdale is to pull two in the races next term, and Blake seven, and then Diogenes will go to five. He's obliged to pull seven now, because Blake won't come down this term; no more will Drysdale. They say there will be plenty of time after Easter."

"It's a great pity," said Hardy.

"Isn't it?" said Tom; "and it makes Miller so savage. He walks into us all as if it were our faults. Do you think he's a good coxswain?"

"First-rate on most points, but rather too sharp-tongued. You can't get a man's best out of him without a little praise."

"Yes, that's just it; he puts one's back up," said Tom. "But the captain is a splendid fellow; isn't he?"

"Yes; but a little too easy, at least with men like Blake and Drysdale. He ought to make them train or turn them out."

"But whom could he get? There's nobody else. If you would pull, now — why shouldn't you? I'm sure it would make us all right."

"I don't subscribe to the club," said Hardy. "I wish I had, for I should like to have pulled with you and behind Jervis this year."

"Do let me tell the captain," said Tom; "I'm sure he'd manage it somehow."

"I'm afraid it's too late," said Hardy; "I cut myself off from every thing of the sort two years ago, and I'm beginning to think I was a fool for my pains."

Nothing more was said on the subject at the time, but Tom went away in great spirits at having drawn this confession out of Hardy — the more so, perhaps, because he flattered himself that he had had something to say to the change in his friend. From this time he set himself to work on the problem of getting Hardy into the racing boat of St. Ambrose's College.

## CHAPTER X.

### SUMMER TERM.

How many spots in life are there which will bear comparison with the beginning of our second term at the university? So far as external circumstances are concerned, it seems hard to know what a man could find to ask for at that period of his life, if a fairy godmother were to alight in his rooms and offer him the usual three wishes. The sailor who had asked for "all the grog in the world," and "all the baccy in the world," was indeed driven to "a little more baccy" as his third requisition; but, at any rate, his two first requisitions were to some extent grounded on what he held to be substantial wants; he felt himself actually limited in the matters of grog and tobacco. The condition which Jack would have been in as a wisher, if he had been started on his quest with the assurance that his utmost desires in the direction of alcohol and narcotics were already provided for, and must be left out of the question, is the only one affording a pretty exact parallel to the case we are considering. In our second term we are no longer freshmen, and begin to feel ourselves at home, while both "smalls" and "greats" are sufficiently distant to be altogether ignored, if we are that way inclined, or to be looked forward to with confidence that the game is in our own hands if we are reading men. Our financial position — unless we have exercised rare ingenuity in involving ourselves — is all that heart can desire; we have ample allowances paid in quarterly to the



university bankers without thought or trouble of ours, and our credit is at its zenith. It is a part of our recognized duty to repay the hospitality we have received as freshmen; and all men will be sure to come to our first parties, to see how we do the thing; it will be our own faults if we do not keep them in future. We have not had time to injure our characters to any material extent with the authorities of our own college, or of the university. Our spirits are never likely to be higher, or our digestions better. These, and many other comforts and advantages, environ the fortunate youth returning to Oxford after his first vacation; thrice fortunate, however, if, as happened in our hero's case, it is Easter term to which he is returning; for that Easter term, with the four days' vacation, and little Trinity term at the end of it, is surely the cream of the Oxford year. Then, even in this, our stern northern climate, the sun is beginning to have power, the days have lengthened out, greatcoats are unnecessary at morning chapel, and the miseries of numbed hands and shivering skins no longer accompany every pull on the river and canter on Bullingdon. In Christ Church meadows and the college gardens the birds are making sweet music in the tall elms; you may almost hear the thick grass growing, and the buds on tree and shrub are changing from brown, red, or purple, to emerald green under your eyes; the glorious old city is putting on her best looks and bursting out into laughter and song. In a few weeks the races begin, and Cowley Marsh will be alive with white tents and joyous cricketers. A quick ear, on the towing-path by the Gut, may feast at one time on those three sweet sounds, the thud thud of the eight-oar, the crack of the rifles at the weirs, and the click of the bat on the Magdalen ground. And then Commemoration rises in the background with its clouds of fair visitors, and

visions of excursions to Woodstock and Nuneham in the summer days; of windows open on to the old quadrangles in the long, still evenings, through which silver laughter and strains of sweet music not made by man, steal out and puzzle the old celibate jackdaws peering down from the battlements with heads on one side. To crown all, long vacation, beginning with the run to Henley regatta, or up to town to see the match with Cambridge at Lord's and taste some of the sweets of the season, before starting on some pleasant tour or reading party, or dropping back into the quiet pleasures of English country life! Surely, the lot of young Englishmen who frequent our universities is cast in pleasant places; the country has a right to expect something from those for whom she finds such a life as this in the years when enjoyment is keenest.

Tom was certainly alive to the advantages of the situation, and entered on his kingdom without any kind of scruple. He was very glad to find things so pleasant, and quite resolved to make the best he could of them. Then he was in a particularly good-humor with himself; for, in deference to the advice of Hardy, he had actually fixed on the books which he should send in for his little-go examination before going down for the Easter vacation, and had read them through at home, devoting an hour or two almost daily to this laudable occupation. So he felt himself entitled to take things easily on his return. He had brought back with him two large hampers of good sound wine, a gift from his father who had a horror of letting his son set before his friends the fire-water which is generally sold to the undergraduate. Tom found that his father's notions of the rate of consumption prevalent in the university were wild in the extreme. "In his time," the squire said, "eleven men came to his first wine party, and he had opened nineteen bottles of port for them. He was very

glad to hear that the habits of the place had changed so much for the better ; and as Tom wouldn't want nearly so much wine, he should have it out of an older bin." Accordingly, the port which Tom employed the first hour after his return in stacking carefully away in his cellar had been more than twelve years in bottle, and he thought with unmixed satisfaction of the pleasing effect it would have on Jervis and Miller, and the one or two other men who knew good wine from bad, and guided public opinion on the subject, and of the social importance which he would soon attain to from the reputation of giving good wine.

The idea of entertaining, of being hospitable, is a pleasant and fascinating one to most young men ; but the act soon gets to be a bore to all but a few curiously constituted individuals. With these hospitality becomes first a passion and then a faith — a faith the practice of which, in the cases of some of its professors, reminds one strongly of the hints on such subjects scattered about the New Testament. Most of us, I fear, feel, when our friends leave us, a certain sort of satisfaction, not unlike that of paying a bill ; they have been done for, and can't expect any thing more for a long time. Such thoughts never occur to your really hospitable man. Long years of narrow means cannot hinder him from keeping open house for whoever wants to come to him, and setting the best of every thing before all comers. He has no notion of giving you any thing but the best he can command, if it be only fresh porter from the nearest mews. He asks himself not, "Ought I to invite A or B ? do I owe him any thing ?" but "Would A or B like to come here ?" Give me these men's houses for real enjoyment, though you never get any thing very choice there, — (how can a man produce old wine who gives his oldest every day ?) — seldom much elbow room or orderly arrangement. The high arts of gastronomy and

scientific drinking, so much valued in our highly civilized community, are wholly unheeded by him, are altogether above him, are cultivated in fact by quite another set, who have very little of the genuine spirit of hospitality in them ; from whose tables, should one by chance happen upon them, one rises certainly with a feeling of satisfaction and expansion, chiefly physical, so far as I can judge, but entirely without that expansion of heart which one gets at the scramble of the hospitable man. So that we are driven to remark, even in such every-day matters as these, that it is the invisible, the spiritual, which, after all, gives value and reality even to dinners ; and, with Solomon, to prefer to the most touching *diner Russe*, the dinner of herbs where love is, though I trust that neither we nor Solomon should object to well-dressed cutlets with our salad, if they happened to be going.

Readers will scarcely need to be told that one of the first things Tom did, after depositing his luggage and unpacking his wine, was to call at Hardy's rooms, where he found his friend deep as usual in his books, the hard-worked atlases and dictionaries of all sorts taking up more space than ever. After the first hearty greetings, Tom occupied his old place with much satisfaction.

"How long have you been up, old fellow?" he began ; "you look quite settled."

"I only went home for a week. Well, what have you been doing in the vacation?"

"Oh ! there was nothing much going on ; so amongst other things, I've floored my little-go work."

"Bravo ! you'll find the comfort of it now. I hardly thought you would take to the grind so easily."

"It's pleasant enough for a spurt," said Tom ; "but I shall never manage a horrid perpetual grind like yours. But what in the world have you been doing to your walls?"



Tom might well ask, for the corners of Hardy's room were covered with sheets of paper of different sizes, pasted against the walls in groups. In the line of sight from about the height of four to six feet, there was scarcely an inch of the original paper visible, and round each centre group there were outlying patches and streamers, stretching towards floor or ceiling, or away nearly to the book-cases or fireplace.

"Well, don't you think it a great improvement on the old paper?" said Hardy. "I shall be out of rooms next term, and it will be a hint to the college that the rooms want papering. You're no judge of such matters, or I should ask you whether you don't see great artistic taste in the arrangement."

"Why, they're nothing but maps, and lists of names and dates," said Tom, who had got up to examine the decorations. "And what in the world are all these queer pins for?" he went on, pulling a strong pin with a large red sealing-wax head out of the map nearest to him.

"Hallo! take care there; what are you about?" shouted Hardy, getting up and hastening to the corner. "Why, you irreverent beggar, those pins are the famous statesmen and warriors of Greece and Rome."

"Oh! I beg your pardon; I didn't know I was in such august company;" saying which, Tom proceeded to stick the red-headed pin back into the wall.

"Now, just look at that," said Hardy, taking the pin out of the place where Tom had stuck it. "Pretty doings there would be amongst them with your management. This pin is Brasidas; you've taken him away from Naupactus, where he was watching the eleven Athenian galleys anchored under the temple of Apollo, and struck him down right in the middle of the Pnyx, where he will be instantly torn in pieces by a ruthless and reckless Jaco-

bin mob. You call yourself a Tory indeed! However, 'twas always the same with you Tories; calculating, cruel, and jealous. Use your leaders up, and throw them over — that's the golden rule of aristocracies."

"Hang Brasidas," said Tom, laughing; "stick him back at Naupactus again. Here, which is Cleon? The scoundrel! give me hold of him, and I'll put him in a hot berth."

"That's he with a yellow head. Let him alone, I tell you, or all will be hopeless confusion when Grey comes for his lecture. We're only in the third year of the war."

"I like your chaff about Tories sacrificing their great men," said Tom, putting his hands in his pockets to avoid temptation. "How about your precious democracy, old fellow? Which is Socrates?"

"Here, the dear old boy! — this pin with the great gray head, in the middle of Athens, you see. I pride myself on my Athens. Here's the Piræus and the long walls, and the hill of Mars. Isn't it as good as a picture?"

"Well, it *is* better than most maps, I think," said Tom. "But you're not going to slip out so easily. I want to know whether your pet democracy did or did not murder Socrates."

"I'm not bound to defend democracies. But look at my pins. It may be the natural fondness of a parent, but I declare they seem to me to have a great deal of character, considering the material. You'll guess them at once, I'm sure, if you mark the color and shape of the wax. This one, now, for instance, who is he?"

"Alcibiades," answered Tom, doubtfully.

"Alcibiades!" shouted Hardy; "you fresh from Rugby, and not know your Thucydides better than that? There's Alcibiades, that little purple-headed, foppish pin, by Soc-

rates. This rusty-colored one is that respectable old stick-in-the-mud, Nicias."

"Well, but you've made Alcibiades nearly the smallest of the whole lot," said Tom.

"So he was, to my mind," said Hardy; "just the sort of insolent young ruffian whom I should have liked to buy at my price, and sell at his own. He must have been very like some of our gentlemen-commoners, with the addition of brains."

"I should really think, though," said Tom, "it must be a capital plan for making you remember the history."

"It is, I flatter myself. I've long had the idea, but I should never have worked it out and found the value of it but for Grey. I invented it to coach him in his history. You see we are in the Grecian corner; over there is the Roman; you'll find Livy and Tacitus worked out there, just as Herodotus and Thucydides are here; and the pins are stuck for the Second Punic War, where we are just now. I shouldn't wonder if Grey got his first, after all, he's picking up so quick in my corners; and says he never forgets any set of events when he has pricked them out with the pins."

"Is he working at that school still?" asked Tom.

"Yes, as hard as ever. He didn't go down for the vacation, and I really believe it was because the curate told him the school would go wrong if he went away."

"It's very plucky of him, but I do think he's a great fool not to knock it off now, till he has passed, don't you?"

"No," said Hardy; "he is getting more good there than he can ever get in the schools, though I hope he'll do well in them, too."

"Well, I hope so, for he deserves it. And now, Hardy, to change the subject, I'm going to give my first wine

next Thursday ; and here's the first card which has gone out for it. You'll promise me to come, now, wont you ? ”

“ What a hurry you're in,” said Hardy, taking the card, which he put on his mantel-piece, after examining it.

“ But you'll promise to come, now ? ”

“ I'm very hard at work, — I can't be sure.”

“ You needn't stay above half an hour. I've brought back some famous wine from the governor's cellar ; and I want so to get you and Jervis together. He is sure to come.”

“ Why, that's the bell for chapel beginning already,” said Hardy ; “ I had no notion it was so late. I must be off, to put the new servitor up to his work. Will you come in after Hall ? ”

“ Yes, if you will come to me next Thursday.”

“ We'll talk about it. But mind you come to-night, for you'll find me working Grey in the Punic Wars, and you'll see how the pins act. I'm very proud of my show.”

And so Hardy went off to chapel, and Tom to Drysdale's rooms, not at all satisfied that he had made Hardy safe. He found Drysdale lolling on his sofa, as usual, and fondling Jack. He had just arrived, and his servant and the scout were unpacking his portmanteaus. He seemed pleased to see Tom, but looked languid and used up.

“ Where have you been this vacation ? ” said Tom. “ You look seedy.”

“ You may say that,” said Drysdale. “ Here, William, get out a bottle of Schiedam. Have a taste of bitters ? there's nothing like it to set one's digestion right.”

“ No, thankee,” said Tom, rejecting the glass which William proffered him ; “ my appetite don't want improving.”

“ You're lucky, then,” said Drysdale. “ Ah, that's the right stuff ! I feel better already.”



"But where have you been?"

"Oh, in the little village. It's no use being in the country at this time of year. I just went up to Limmer's, and there I stuck, with two or three more, till to-day."

"I can't stand London for more than a week," said Tom. "What did you do all day?"

"We hadn't much to say to daylight," said Drysdale. "What with theatres, and sparring cribs, and the Coal-hole, and cider-cellars, and a little play in St. James' Street now and then, one wasn't up to early rising. However, I was better than the rest, for I had generally breakfasted by two o'clock."

"No wonder you look seedy. You'd much better have been in the country."

"I should have been more in pocket, at any rate," said Drysdale. "By Jove, how it runs away with the ready! I'm fairly cleaned out; and if I haven't luck at van joln, I'll be hanged if I know how I'm to get through term. But, look here, here's a bundle of the newest songs — first-rate, some of them." And he threw some papers across to Tom, who glanced at them without being at all edified."

"You're going to pull regularly, I hope, this term, Drysdale?"

"Yes, I think so; it's a cheap amusement, and I want a little training, for a change."

"That's all right."

"I've brought down some dresses for our gypsy business, by the way. I didn't forget that. Is Blake back?"

"I don't know," said Tom; "but we sha'n't have time before the races."

"Well, afterwards will do; though the days oughtn't to be too long. I'm all for a little darkness in masquerading"

"There's five o'clock striking. Are you going to dine in Hall?"

"No; I shall go to the Mitre, and get a broil."

"Then I'm off. Let's see, — will you come and wine with me next Thursday?"

"Yes; only send us a card, 'to remind.'"

"All right!" said Tom, and went off to Hall, feeling dissatisfied and uncomfortable about his fast friend, for whom he had a sincere regard.

After Hall, Tom made a short round amongst his acquaintance, and then, giving himself up to the strongest attraction, returned to Hardy's rooms, comforting himself with the thought that it really must be an act of Christian charity to take such a terrible reader off his books for once in a way, when his conscience pricked him for intruding on Hardy during his hours of work. He found Grey there, who was getting up his Roman history, under Hardy's guidance; and the two were working the pins on the maps and lists in the Roman corner when Tom arrived. He begged them not to stop, and very soon was as much interested in what they were doing as if he also were going into the schools in May; for Hardy had a way of throwing life into what he was talking about, and, like many men with strong opinions and passionate natures, either carried his hearers off their legs and away with him altogether, or roused every spark of combativeness in them. The latter was the effect which his lecture on the Punic Wars had on Tom. He made several protests as Hardy went on; but Grey's anxious looks kept him from going fairly into action, till Hardy stuck the black pin, which represented Scipio, triumphantly in the middle of Carthage, and, turning round, said, "And now for some tea, Grey, before you have to turn out."

Tom opened fire while the tea was brewing.

"You couldn't say any thing bad enough about aristocracies this morning, Hardy, and now to-night you are crowing over the success of the heaviest and cruelest oligarchy that ever lived, and praising them up to the skies."

"Hullo! here's a breeze!" said Hardy, smiling; "but I rejoice, O Brown! in that they thrashed the Carthaginians, and not, as you seem to think, in that they, being aristocrats, thrashed the Carthaginians; for oligarchs they were not at this time."

"At any rate, they answer to the Spartans in the struggle, and the Carthaginians to the Athenians; and yet all your sympathies are with the Romans to-night in the Punic Wars, though they were with the Athenians before dinner."

"I deny your position. The Carthaginians were nothing but a great trading aristocracy — with a glorious family or two, I grant you, like that of Hannibal, but, on the whole, a dirty, bargain-driving, buy-cheap-and-sell-dear aristocracy — of whom the world was well rid. They like the Athenians indeed! Why, just look what the two people have left behind them —"

"Yes," interrupted Tom, "but we only know the Carthaginians through the reports of their destroyers. Your heroes trampled them out with hoofs of iron."

"Do you think the Roman hoof could have trampled out their Homer if they ever had one?" said Hardy; "the Romans conquered Greece, too, remember."

"But Greece was never so near beating them."

"True. But I hold to my point. Carthage was the mother of all hucksters, compassing sea and land to sell her wares."

"And no bad line of life for a nation. At least, Englishmen ought to think so."

"No, they ought not; at least if 'Punica fides' is to be

the rule of trade. Selling any amount of Brummagem wares never did nation or man much good and never will. Eh, Grey?"

Grey winced at being appealed to, but remarked that he hoped the Church would yet be able to save England from sharing the fate of Tyre and Carthage, the great trading nations of the old world: and then, swallowing his tea, and looking as if he had been caught robbing a hen-roost, he made a sudden exit, and hurried away out of college to the night-school.

"What a pity he is so odd and shy," said Tom; "I should so like to know more of him."

"It is a pity. He is much better when he is alone with me. I think he has heard from some of the set that you are a furious Protestant, and sees an immense amount of stiffneckedness in you."

"But about England and Carthage," said Tom, shirking the subject of his own peculiarities; "you don't really think us like them? It gave me a turn to hear you translating 'Punica fides' into Brummagem wares just now."

"I think that successful trade is our rock ahead. The devil who holds new markets and twenty per cent profits in his gift is the devil that England has most to fear from. 'Because of unrighteous dealings, and riches gotten by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another,' said the wise man. Think of that opium war the other day: I don't believe we can get over many more such businesses as that. Grey falls back on the Church, you see, to save the nation; but the Church he dreams of will never do it. Is there any that can? There *must* be, surely, or we have believed a lie. But this work of making trade righteous, of Christianizing trade, looks like the very hardest the Gospel has ever had to take in hand — in England, at any rate."



Hardy spoke slowly and doubtfully, and paused as if asking for Tom's opinion.

"I never heard it put in that way. I know very little of politics or the state of England. But come, now; the putting down the slave trade and compensating our planters, *that* shows that we are not sold to the trade devil yet, surely."

"I don't think we are. No, thank God, there are plenty of signs that we are likely to make a good fight of it yet."

They talked together for another hour, drawing their chairs round to the fire, and looking dreamily into the embers as is the wont of men who are throwing out suggestions, and helping one another to think, rather than arguing. At the end of that time Tom left Hardy to his books, and went away laden with several new ideas, one of the clearest of which was that he was awfully ignorant of the contemporary history of his own country, and that it was the thing of all others which he ought to be best informed in, and thinking most about. So, being of an impetuous turn of mind, he went straight to his rooms to commence his new study, where, after diligent hunting, the only food of the kind he required which turned up was the last number of *Bell's Life* from the pocket of his greatcoat. Upon this he fell to work, in default of any thing better, and was soon deep in the P.R. column, which was full of interesting speculations as to the chances of Bungaree in his forthcoming campaign against the British middle-weights. By the time he had skimmed through the well-known sheets, he was satisfied that the columns of his old acquaintance were not the place, except in the police reports, where much could be learnt about the present state or future prospects of England. Then, the first evening of term being a rest-

less time, he wandered out again, and before long landed, as his custom was, at Drysdale's door.

On entering the room he found Drysdale and Blake alone together, the former looking more serious than Tom had ever seen him before. As for Blake, the restless, haggard expression sat more heavily than ever on his face, marring its beauty, and almost making it impossible to look on without a shudder. It was clear that they changed the subject of their talk abruptly on his entrance; so Tom looked anywhere except straight before him as he was greeting Blake. He really felt very sorry for him at the moment. However, in another five minutes, he was in fits of laughter over Blake's description of the conversation between himself and the coachman who had driven the Glo'ster day-mail by which he had come up: in which conversation, nevertheless, when Tom came to think it over and try to repeat it afterwards, the most facetious parts seemed to be the "sez he's" and "sez I's" with which Jehu larded his stories; so he gave up the attempt, wondering what he could have found in it to laugh at.

"By the way, Blake," said Drysdale, "how about our excursion into Berkshire masquerading this term? Are you game?"

"Not exactly," said Blake; "I really must make the most of such time as I have left, if I'm to go into the schools this term."

"If there's one thing which spoils Oxford, it is those schools," said Drysdale; "they get in the way of every thing. I ought to be going up for smalls myself next term, and I haven't opened a book yet, and don't mean. Follow a good example, old fellow, you're cock-sure of your first, everybody knows."

"I wish everybody would back his opinion and give me

a shade of odds. Why, I have scarcely thought of my history."

"Why the D — I should they make such a fuss about history? One knows perfectly well that those old black-guard heathens were no better than they should be; and what good it can do to lumber one's head with who their grandmothers were, and what they ate, and when and where and why they had their stupid brains knocked out, I can't see for the life of me."

"Excellently well put. Where did you pick up such sound views, Drysdale? But you are not examiner yet, and on the whole I must rub up my history somehow. I wish I knew how to do it."

"Can't you put on a coach?" said Drysdale.

"I have one on, but history is his weak point," said Blake.

"I think I can help you," said Tom. "I've just been hearing a lecture in Roman history, and one that won't be so easy to forget as most;" and he went on to explain Hardy's plans, to which Blake listened eagerly.

"Capital!" he said, when Tom had finished. "In whose rooms did you say they are?"

"In Hardy's, and he works at them every night with Grey."

"That's the queer big servitor, his particular pal," put in Drysdale; "there's no accounting for tastes."

"You don't know him," retorted Tom; "and the less you say about him the better."

"I know he wears highlows and short flannels, and —"

"Would you mind asking Hardy to let me come to his lectures?" interrupted Blake, averting the strong language which was rising to Tom's lips. "I think they seem just the things I want. I shouldn't like to offer to pay him, unless you think —"

"I'm quite sure," interrupted Tom, "that he wont take any thing. I will ask him to-morrow whether he will let you come, and he's such a kind, good fellow that I'm almost sure he will."

"I should like to know your pal, too, Brown," said Drysdale; "you must introduce me, with Blake."

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," said Tom.

"Then I shall introduce myself," said Drysdale; "see if I don't sit next him now at your wine on Thursday."

Here Drysdale's scout entered, with two notes, and wished to know if Mr. Drysdale would require any thing more. Nothing but hot water; he could put the kettle on, Drysdale said, and go; and while the scout was fulfilling his orders, he got up carelessly, whistling, and, walking to the fire, read the notes by the light of one of the candles which was burning on the mantel-piece. Blake was watching him eagerly, and Tom saw this, and made some awkward efforts to go on talking about the advantages of Hardy's plan for learning history; but he was talking to deaf ears, and soon came to a standstill. He saw Drysdale crumple up the notes in his hand and shove them into his pocket. After standing for a few seconds in the same position, with his back to them, he turned round with a careless air, and sauntered to the table where they were sitting.

"Let's see, what were we saying?" he began. "Oh, about your eccentric pal, Brown."

"You've answers from both?" interrupted Blake. Drysdale nodded, and was beginning to speak again to Tom, when Blake got up and said, with white lips, "I *must* see them."

"No, never mind, what does it matter?"

"Matter! by Heaven, I must and will see them now."

Tom saw at once that he had better go, and so took up



his cap, wished them good-night, and went off to his own rooms.

He might have been sitting there for about twenty minutes, when Drysdale entered.

"I couldn't help coming over, Brown," he said; "I must talk to some one, and Blake has gone off raging. I don't know what he'll do—I never was so bothered or savage in my life."

"I'm very sorry," said Tom; "he looked very bad in your rooms. Can I do any thing?"

"No, but I must talk to some one. You know—no you don't, by the way—but, however, Blake got me out of a tremendous scrape in my first term, and there's nothing that I'm not bound to do for him, and wouldn't do if I could. Yes, by George, whatever fellows say of me, they shall never say I didn't stand by a man who has stood by me. Well, he owes a dirty £300 or £400, or something of the sort—nothing worth talking of I know—to people in Oxford, and they've been leading him a dog's life this year and more. Now, he's just going up for his degree, and two or three of these creditors—the most rascally, of course—are suing him in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, thinking now's the time to put the screw on. He will be ruined if they are not stopped somehow. Just after I saw you to-day, he came to me about it. You never saw a fellow in such a state; I could see it was tearing him to pieces, telling it to me even. However, I soon set him at ease as far as I was concerned; but, as the Devil will have it, I can't lend him the money, though £60 would get him over the examination, and then he can make terms. My guardian advanced me £200 beyond my allowance just before Easter, and I haven't £20 left, and the bank here has given me notice not to overdraw any more. However, I thought to

settle it easily enough; so I told him to meet me at the Mitre in half an hour for dinner, and when he was gone I sat down and wrote two notes — the first to St. Cloud. That fellow was with us on and off in town, and one night he and I went partners at *roulette*, I finding ready money for the time, gains and losses to be equally shared in the end. I left the table to go and eat some supper, and he lost £80, and paid it out of my money. I didn't much care, and he cursed the luck, and acknowledged that he owed me £40 at the time. Well, I just reminded him of this £40 and said I should be glad of it (I know he has plenty of money just now), but added, that it might stand if he would join me and Blake in borrowing £60; I was fool enough to add that Blake was in difficulties, and I was most anxious to help him. As I thought that St. Cloud would probably pay the £40 but do no more, I wrote also to Chanter — Heaven knows why, except that the beast rolls in money, and has fawned on me till I've been nearly sick this year past — and asked him to lend Blake £50 on our joint note of hand. Poor Blake! when I told him what I had done at the Mitre, I think I might as well have stuck the carving-knife into him. We had a wretched two hours; then you came in, and I got my two answers — here they are."

Tom took the proffered notes, and read:—

"DEAR DRYSDALE,— Please explain the allusion in yours to some mysterious £40. I remember perfectly the occurrence to which you refer in another part of your note. You were tired of sitting at the table, and went off to supper, leaving me (not by my own desire) to play for you with your money. I did so, and had abominable luck, as you will remember, for I handed you back a sadly dwindled heap on your return to the table. I hope you are in no row about that night? I shall be quite ready

to give evidence of what passed if it will help you in any way. I am always yours very truly,

“A. ST. CLOUD.

“P.S. I must decline the little joint operation for Blake's benefit, which you propose.”

The second answer ran :—

“DEAR DRYSDALE,—I am sorry that I cannot accommodate Mr. Blake, as a friend of yours, but you see his acceptance is mere waste paper, and you cannot give security until you are of age, so if you were to die the money would be lost. Mr. Blake has always carried his head as high as if he had £5,000 a year to spend; perhaps now he will turn less haughty to men who could buy him up easy enough. I remain yours sincerely,

“JABEZ CHANTER.”

Tom looked up, and met Drysdale's eyes, which had more of purpose in them than he had ever seen before. “Fancy poor Blake reading those two notes,” he said, “and 'twas I brought them on him. However, he shall have the money somehow to-morrow, if I pawn my watch. I'll be even with those two some day.” The two remained in conference for some time longer; it is hardly worth while to do more than relate the result.

At three o'clock the next day, Blake, Drysdale, and Tom were in the back-parlor of a second-rate inn, in the corn-market; on the table were pens and ink, some cases of eau-de-Cologne and jewellery, and behind it a fat man of forbidding aspect, who spent a day or two in each term at Oxford. He held in his thick red, damp hand, ornamented as to the fore-finger with a huge ring, a piece of paper.

“Then I shall draw for a hundred-and-five?”

“If you do, we wont sign,” said Drysdale; “now, be

quick, Ben" (the fat man's name was Benjamin), "you infernal shark, we've been wrangling long enough over it. Draw for £100, at three months, or we are off."

"Then, Mr. Drysdale, you gents will take part in goods. I wish to do all I can for gents as comes well introduced, but money is very scarce just now."

"Not a stuffed bird, bottle of eau-de-Cologne, ring, or cigar, will we have; so now, no more nonsense, put down £75 on the table."

The money-lender, after another equally useless attempt to move Drysdale, who was the only one of the party who spoke, produced a roll of notes, and counted out £75, thinking to himself that he would make this young spark sing a different tune before very long. He then filled up the piece of paper, muttering that the interest was nothing, considering the risk, and he hoped they would help him to something better with some of their friends. Drysdale reminded him, in terms not too carefully chosen, that he was getting cent per cent. The document was signed, — Drysdale took the notes, and they went out.

"Well, that's well over," said Drysdale as they walked towards High Street. "I'm proud of my tactics, I must say; one does much better for anybody than for one's self. If I had been on my own hook that fellow would have let me in for £20 worth of stuffed birds and bad jewellery. Let's see, what do you want, Blake?"

"Sixty will do," said Blake.

"You had better take £65; there'll be some law costs to pay." And Drysdale handed him the notes.

"Now, Brown, shall we divide the balance — a fiver apiece?"

"No, thank you," said Tom, "I don't want it; and, as you two are to hold me harmless, you must do what you



like with the money." So Drysdale pocketed the £10, after which they walked in silence to the gates of St. Ambrose. The most reckless youngster doesn't begin this sort of thing without reflections which are apt to keep him silent. At the gates, Blake wrung both their hands. "I don't say much, but I sha'n't forget it." He got out the words with some difficulty, and went off to his rooms.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY.

WITHIN the next week or two several important events had happened to one and another of our St. Ambrose friends. Tom had introduced Blake to Hardy, after some demur on the part of the latter. Blake was his senior by a term ; might have called on him any time these three years ; why should he want to make his acquaintance now ? But when Tom explained to him that it would be a kind thing to let Blake come and coach up history with him, for that unless he took a high degree in the coming examination, he would have to leave the college, and probably be ruined for life, Hardy at once consented.

Tom did not venture to inquire for a day or two how the two hit it off together. When he began cautiously to approach the subject, he was glad to find that Hardy liked Blake. "He is a gentleman, and very able," he said. "It is curious to see how quickly he is overhauling Grey, and yet how Grey takes to him. He has never looked scared at him (as he still does at you, by the way) since the first night they met. Blake has the talent of setting people at their ease without saying any thing. I shouldn't wonder if Grey thinks he has sound Church notions. It's a dangerous talent, and may make a man very false if he doesn't take care." Tom asked if Blake would be up in his history in time. Hardy thought he might, perhaps ; but he had great lee-way to make up. If capacity for taking in cram would do it, he would be all right. He

had been well crammed in his science, and had put him (Hardy) up to many dodges which might be useful in the schools, and which you couldn't get without a private tutor.

Then Tom's first wine had gone off most successfully. Jervis and Miller had come early and stayed late, and said all that was handsome of the port, so that he was already a social hero with the boating set. Drysdale, of course, had been there, rattling away to everybody in his reckless fashion, and setting a good example to the two or three fast men whom Tom knew well enough to ask, and who consequently behaved pretty well, and gave themselves no airs, though, as they went away together, they grumbled slightly that Brown didn't give claret. The rest of the men had shaken together well, and seemed to enjoy themselves. The only drawback to Tom had been that neither Hardy nor Grey had appeared. They excused themselves afterwards on the score of reading, but Tom felt aggrieved in Hardy's case; he knew that it was only an excuse.

Then the training had begun seriously. Miller had come up specially for the first fortnight, to get them well in hand, as he said. After they were once fairly started, he would have to go down till just before the races; but he thought he might rely on the captain to keep them up to their work in the interval.

So Miller, the coxswain, took to drawing the bow up to the ear at once. At the very beginning of term, five or six weeks before the races, the St. Ambrose boat was to be seen every other day at Abingdon; and early dinners, limitation of liquids and tobacco, and abstinence from late supper parties, pastry, ice, and all manner of trash likely, in Miller's opinion, to injure nerve or wind, were hanging over the crew, and already, in fact, to some ex-

tent, enforced. The captain shrugged his shoulders, submitted to it all himself, and worked away with imperturbable temper, merely hinting to Miller, in private, that he was going too fast, and that it would be impossible to keep it up. Diogenes highly approved; he would have become the willing slave of any tyranny which should insist that every adult male subject should pull twenty miles, and never imbibe more than a pint of liquid in the twenty-four hours. Tom was inclined to like it, as it helped him to realize the proud fact that he was actually in the boat. The rest of the crew were in all stages of mutiny, and were only kept from breaking out by their fondness for the captain, and the knowledge that Miller was going in a few days. As it was, Blake was the only one who openly rebelled; once or twice he stayed away. Miller swore and grumbled, the captain shook his head, and the crew in general rejoiced.

It is to one of these occasions to which we must now turn. If the usual casual voyager of novels had been standing on Sandford lock at about four, on the afternoon of April —th, 18—, he might have beheld the St. Ambrose eight-oar coming with a steady swing up the last reach. If such voyager were in the least conversant with the glorious mystery of rowing, he would have felt his heart warm at the magnificent sweep and life of the stroke, and would, on the whole, have been pleased with the performance of the crew generally, considered as a college crew in the early stages of training. They came "hard all" up to the pool below the lock, the coxswain standing in the stern, with a tiller-rope in each hand, and then shipped oars; the lock-gates opened, and the boat entered, and in another minute or two was moored to the bank above the lock, and the crew strolled into the little inn which stands by the lock, and, after stopping in



the bar to lay hands on several pewters full of porter, passed through the house into the quoit and skittle grounds behind. These were already well filled with men of other crews, playing in groups, or looking on at the players. One of these groups, as they passed, seized on the captain, and Miller stopped with him; the rest of the St. Ambrose men, in no humor for skittles, quoits, or any relaxation except rest and grumbling, took possession of the first table and seats which offered, and came to anchor. Then followed a moment of intense enjoyment, of a sort only appreciable by those who have had a twelve miles' training pull with a coxswain as sharp as a needle and in an awful temper.

"Ah," said Drysdale, taking a pewter down from his lips, with a sigh, and handing it to Tom, who sat next him, "by Jove, I feel better."

"It's almost worth while pulling 'hard all' from Abingdon, to get such a thirst," said another of the crew.

"I'll tell you what, though," said Drysdale, "to-day's the last day you'll catch me in this blessed boat."

Tom had just finished his draught, but did not reply; it was by no means the first time that Drysdale had announced this resolve. The rest were silent also.

"It's bad enough to have to pull your heart out, without getting abused all the way into the bargain. There Miller stands in the stern—and a devilish easy thing it is to stand there and walk into us—I can see him chuckle as he comes to you and me, Brown—'Now, 2, well forward.' '3, don't jerk.' 'Now, 2, throw your weight on the oar; come, now, you can get another pound on.' I hang on like grim Death. Then it's, 'Time, 2; now, 3—'"

"Well, it's a great compliment," broke in Tom, with a laugh: "he thinks he can make something of us."

"He'll make nothing of us first, I think," said Drysdale. "I've lost eight pounds in a fortnight. The captain ought to put me in every place in the boat, in turn, to make it watertight. I've larded the bottom boards under my seat so that not a drop of water will ever come through again."

"A very good thing for you, old fellow," said Diogenes; "you look ten times better than you did at the beginning of term."

"I don't know what you call a good thing, you old fluter. I'm obliged to sit on my hip-bones; I can't go to lecture; all the tutors think I'm poking fun at them, and put me on directly. I haven't been able to go to lecture this ten days."

"So fond of lecture as he is, too, poor fellow," put in Tom.

"But they've stopped my commons for staying away," said Drysdale; "not that I care much for that, though."

"Well, Miller goes down to-morrow morning — I heard him say so," said another.

"Then we'll memorialize the captain, and get out of these Abingdon pulls. Life isn't worth having at this rate."

"No other boat has been below Sandford, yet."

And so they sat on and plotted, and soon most of the other crews started. And then they took their turn at skittles, and almost forgot their grievances, which, in order to be clear, I must now explain to those of my readers who don't know the river at Oxford.

The river runs along the south of the city, getting into the university quarter after it passes under the bridge connecting Berks and Oxfordshire, over which is the road to Abingdon. Just below this bridge are the boat-builders' establishments, on both sides of the river, and then on the

Oxfordshire side is Christchurch Meadow, opposite which is moored the university barge. Here is the goal of all university races, or used to be in the times I am speaking of; and the racecourse stretches away down the river for a mile and a half, and a little below the starting-place of the races in Iffley Lock. The next lock below Iffley is the Sandford Lock (where we left our boat's crew playing at skittles), which is about a mile and a half below Iffley. Below Sandford there is no lock till you get to Abingdon, a distance of six miles and more by the river. Now, inasmuch as the longest distance to be rowed in the races is only the upper mile and a half from Iffley to the university barge, of course, all the crews think themselves very hardly treated if they are taken further than to Sandford. Pulling "hard all" from Sandford to Iffley, and then again from Iffley over the regular course, ought to be enough in all conscience to chorus the crews; and most captains and coxswains give in. But here and there some enemy of his kind — some uncomfortable, worriting, energizing mortal, like Miller — gets command of a boat, and then the unfortunate crew are dragged, bemoaning their fate, down below Sandford, where no friendly lock intervenes to break off the long, steady swing of the training-pull every two miles; and the result for the time is blisters and mutiny; though I am bound to add that it generally tells, and that the crew which has been undergoing that *peine forte et dure* is very apt to get the change out of it on the nights of hard races.

So the St. Ambrose crew played out their skittles, and settled to appeal to the captain in a body the next day, after Miller's departure; and then, being summoned to the boat, they took to the water again, and paddled steadily up home, arriving just in time for Hall for those who liked to hurry. Drysdale never liked hurrying himself;

besides, he could not dine in Hall, as he was discommoned for persistent absence from lectures, and neglect to go to the dean, when sent for to explain his absence.

"I say, Brown, hang Hall," he said to Tom, who was throwing on his things; "come and dine with me at the Mitre. I'll give you a bottle of hock; it's very good there."

"Hock's about the worst thing you can drink in training," said Miller; "isn't it, Jervis?"

"It's no good, certainly," said the captain, as he put on his cap and gown. "Come along, Miller."

"There, you hear?" said Miller. "You can drink a glass of sound sherry, if you want wine." And he followed the captain.

Drysdale performed a defiant pantomime after the retiring coxswain, and then easily carried his point with Tom, except as to the hock. So they walked up to the Mitre together, where Drysdale ordered dinner and a bottle of hock in the coffee-room.

"Don't order hock, Drysdale; I sha'n't drink any."

"Then I shall have it all to my own cheek. If you begin making a slave of yourself to that Miller, he'll very soon cut you down to a glass of water a day, with a pinch of rhubarb in it, and make you drink that standing on your head."

"Gammon; but I don't think it's fair on the rest of the crew not to train as well as one can."

"You don't suppose drinking a pint of hock to-night will make me pull any the worse this day six weeks, when the races begin, do you?"

"No; but—"

"Hullo! look here," said Drysdale, who was inspecting a printed bill pinned up on the wall of the coffee-room; "Wombwell's menagerie is in the town, somewhere down



by Worcester. What fun! We'll go there after dinner."

The food arrived with Drysdale's hock, which he seemed to enjoy all the more from the assurance which every glass gave him that he was defying the coxswain, and doing just the thing he would most dislike. So he drank away, and facetiously speculated how he could be such an idiot as to go on pulling. Every day of his life he made good resolutions in the reach above the Gut that it should be his last performance, and always broke them next day. He supposed the habit he had of breaking all good resolutions was the way to account for it.

After dinner, they set off to find the wild beast show; and, as they will be at least a quarter of an hour reaching it, for the pitch is in a part of the suburbs little known to gownsmen, I propose to seize the opportunity of making a few remarks to the patient reader.

Our hero, on his first appearance in public, some years since, was, without his own consent, at once patted on the back by the good-natured critics, and enrolled for better for worse in the brotherhood of muscular Christians, who at that time were beginning to be recognized as an actual and lusty portion of general British life. As his biographer, I am not about to take exceptions to his enrolment; for, after considering the persons up and down her majesty's dominions to whom the new nickname has been applied, the principles which they are supposed to hold, and the sort of lives they are supposed to lead, I cannot see where he could in these times have fallen upon a nobler brotherhood. I am speaking, of course, under correction, and with only a slight acquaintance with the faith of muscular Christianity, gathered almost entirely from the witty expositions and comments of persons of a somewhat dyspeptic habit, who are not amongst the faithful

themselves. Indeed, I am not aware that any authorized articles of belief have been sanctioned or published by the sect, church, or whatever they may be. Moreover, at the age at which our hero has arrived, and having regard to his character, I should say that he has in all likelihood thought very little on the subject of belief, and would scarcely be able to give any formal account of his own, beyond that contained in the Church Catechism, which I, for one, think may very well satisfy him for the present. Nevertheless, had he been suddenly caught at the gate of St. Ambrose's College, by one of the gentlemen who do the classifying for the British public, and accosted with, "Sir, you belong to a body whose creed is to love God, and walk one thousand miles in one thousand hours," I believe he would have replied, "Do I, sir? I'm very glad to hear it. They must be a very good set of fellows! how many weeks' training do they allow?"

But in the course of my inquiries on the subject of muscular Christians, their works and ways, a fact has forced itself on my attention, which for the sake of ingenious youth, like my hero, ought not to be passed over. I find then, that side by side with these muscular Christians, and apparently claiming some sort of connection with them (the same concern, as the pirates of trade-marks say), have risen up another set of persons, against whom I desire to caution my readers and my hero, and to warn the latter that I do not mean on any pretence whatever to allow him to connect himself with them, however much he may be taken with their off-hand, "hail-brother well-met" manner and dress, which may easily lead careless observers to take the counterfeit for the true article. I must call the persons in question "musclemen," as distinguished from muscular Christians; the only point in common between the two being, that both hold it to be a

good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies, ready to be put at the shortest notice to any work of which bodies are capable, and to do it well. Here all likeness ends, for the muscleman seems to have no belief whatever as to the purposes for which his body has been given him, except some lazy idea that it is to go up and down the world with him, belaboring men and captivating women for his benefit or pleasure, at once the servant and fermenter of those fierce and brutal passions which he seems to think it a necessity, and rather a fine thing than otherwise, to indulge and obey. Whereas, so far as I know, the least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men. He does not hold that mere strength or activity are in themselves worthy of any respect or worship, or that one man is a bit better than another because he can knock him down, or carry a bigger sack of potatoes than he. For mere power, whether of body or intellect, he has (I hope and believe) no reverence whatever, though, *cæteris paribus*, he would probably himself, as a matter of taste, prefer the man who can lift a hundredweight round his head with his little finger, to the man who can construct a string of perfect Sorites, or expound the doctrine of "contradictory inconceivables."

The above remarks occur as our hero is marching innocently down towards his first "town and gown" row, and I should scarcely like to see him in the middle of it, without protesting that it is a mistake. I know that he, and other youngsters of his kidney, will have fits of fighting, or desiring to fight with their poorer brethren, just as

children have the measles. But the shorter the fit the better for the patient, for, like the measles, it is a great mistake, and a most unsatisfactory complaint. If they can escape it altogether so much the better. But instead of treating the fit as a disease, musclemen professors are wont to represent it as a state of health, and to let their disciples run about in middle age with the measles on them as strong as ever. Now although our hero had the measles on him at this particular time, and the passage of arms which I am about shortly to describe led to results of some importance in his history, and cannot therefore be passed over, yet I wish at the same time to disclaim, both in my sponsorial and individual character, all sympathy with town and gown rows, and with all other class rows and quarrels of every sort and kind, whether waged with sword, pen, tongue, fist, or otherwise. Also to say that in all such rows, so far as I have seen or read, from the time when the Roman plebs marched out to Mons Sacer, down to 1848, when the English chartists met on Kennington Common, the upper class are most to blame. It may be that they are not the aggressors on any given occasion: very possibly they may carry on the actual fighting with more fairness (though this is by no means true as a rule); nevertheless, the state of feeling which makes such things possible, especially in England, where men in general are only too ready to be led and taught by their superiors in rank, may be fairly laid at their door. Even in the case of strikes, which just now will of course be at once thrown in my teeth, I say fearlessly, Let any man take the trouble to study the question honestly, and he will come to the conviction that all combinations of the men for the purpose of influencing the labor market, whether in the much and unjustly abused Trades' Societies, or in other forms, have been defensive organizations, and that



the masters might, as a body, over and over again have taken the sting out of them if they would have acted fairly, as many individuals amongst them have done: whether it may not be too late now, is a tremendous question for England, but one which time only can decide.

When Drysdale and Tom at last found the caravans, it was just getting dark. Something of a crowd had collected outside, and there was some hissing as they ascended the short flight of steps which led to the platform in front of the show; but they took no notice of it, paid their money, and entered.

Inside they found an exciting scene. The place was pretty well lighted, and the birds and beasts were all alive in their several dens and cages, walking up and down, and each uttering remonstrances after their own manner, the shrill notes of birds mingling with the moan of the beasts of prey and chatterings of the monkeys. Feeding time had been put off till night to suit the undergraduates, and the undergraduates were proving their appreciation of the attention by playing off all manner of practical jokes on birds and beasts, their keepers, and such of the public as had been rash enough to venture in. At the further end was the keeper, who did the showman, vainly endeavoring to go through his usual jog-trot description. His monotone was drowned every minute by the chorus of voices, each shouting out some new fact in natural history touching the biped or quadruped whom the keeper was attempting to describe. At that day a great deal of this sort of chaff was current, so that the most dunderheaded boy had plenty on the tip of his tongue. A small and indignant knot of townspeople, headed by a stout and severe middle-aged woman, with two big boys, her sons, followed the keeper, endeavoring by caustic remarks and withering

glances to stop the flood of chaff, and restore legitimate authority and the reign of keeper and natural history.

At another point was a long Irishman in cap and gown, who had clearly had as much wine as he could carry, close to the bars of the panther's den, through which he was earnestly endeavoring, with the help of a crooked stick, to draw the tail of whichever of the beasts stopped for a moment in its uneasy walk. On the other side were a set of men bent on burning the wretched monkeys' fingers with the lighted ends of their cigars, in which they seemed successful enough, to judge by the angry chatterings and shriekings of their victims.

The two new-comers paused for a moment on the platform inside the curtain; and then Drysdale, rubbing his hands, and in high glee at the sight of so much misrule in so small a place, led the way down on the floor deep in sawdust, exclaiming, "Well, this *is* a lark! We're just in for all the fun of the fair."

Tom followed his friend, who made straight for the showman, and planted himself at his side, just as that worthy, pointing with his pole, was proceeding —

"This is the jackal, from —"

"The Caribee Hielands, of which I am a native myself," shouted a gownsman.

"This is the jackal, or lion's provider," began again the much-enduring keeper.

"Who always goes before the lion to purvide his purvisions, purwiding there's any thing to purvide," put in Drysdale.

"—really I do think it's scandalous not to let the keeper tell about the beasteses," said the unfortunate matron, with a half turn towards the persecutors, and grasping her bag.

"My dear madam," said Drysdale, in his softest voice.

"I assure you he knows nothing about the beasteses. We are Doctor Buckland's favorite pupils, are also well known to the great Panjandrum, and have eaten more beasteses than the keeper has ever seen."

"I don't know who you are, young man, but you don't know how to behave yourselves," rejoined the outraged female; and the keeper, giving up the jackal as a bad job, pointing with his pole, proceeded —

"The little hanimal, in the upper cage is the hopossum, of North America —"

"The misguided offspring of the raccoon and the gum-tree," put in one of his tormentors.

Here a frightful roaring and struggling at a little distance, mingled with shouts of laughter, and "Hold on, Pat!" "Go it, panther!" interrupted the lecture, and caused a rush to the other side, where the long Irishman, Donovan by name, with one foot against the bars, was holding on to the tail of one of the panthers, which he had at length managed to catch hold of. The next moment he was flat on his back in the sawdust, and his victim was bounding wildly about the cage. The keeper hurried away to look after the outraged panther; and Drysdale, at once installing himself as showman, began at the next cage —

"This is the wild man of the woods, or whangee tangee, the most untamable — good heavens, ma'am, take care!" and he seized hold of the unfortunate woman and pulled her away from the bars.

"Oh, goodness!" she screamed, "it's got my tippet; O, Bill, Peter, catch hold!" Bill and Peter proved unequal to the occasion, but a gownsman seized the vanishing tippet, and after a moment's struggle with the great ape, restored a meagre half to the proper owner, while Jacko sat grinning over the other half, and picking it to pieces.

The poor woman had now had enough of it, and she hurried off with her two boys, followed by a few townspeople who were still in the show, to lay her case directly before the mayor, as she informed the delinquents from the platform before disappearing. Her wrongs were likely to be more speedily avenged, to judge by the angry murmurs which arose outside immediately after her exit.

But still the high jinks went on, Donovan leading all mischief, until the master of the menagerie appeared inside and remonstrated with the men. He must send for a police, he said, if they would not leave the beasts alone. He had put off the feeding in order to suit them; would they let his keepers feed the beasts quietly? The threat of the police was received with shouts of defiance by some of the men, though the greater part seemed of the opinion that matters were getting serious.

The proposal for feeding, however, was welcomed by all and comparative quiet ensued for some ten minutes, while the baskets of joints, bread, stale fish, and potatoes were brought in, and the contents distributed to the famishing occupants of the cages. In the interval of peace the showman-keeper, on a hint from his master, again began his round. But the spirit of mischief was abroad, and it only needed this to make it break out again. In another two minutes the beasts, from the lion to the smallest monkey, were struggling for their suppers with one or more undergraduates; the elephant had torn the gown off Donovan's back, having only just missed his arm; and the manager, in a confusion worthy of the tower of Babel, sent off a keeper for the city police, and turned the gas out.

The audience, after the first moment of surprise and indignation, grouped their way towards the steps and mounted the platform, where they held a council of war. Should they stay where they were or make a sally at once,



break through the crowd and get back to their colleges. It was curious to see how in that short minute individual character came out, and the coward, the cautious man, the resolute, prompt Englishman, each were there, and more than one species of each.

Donovan was one of the last up the steps, and as he stumbled up caught something of the question before the house. He shouted loudly at once for descending, and offering battle. "But, boys," he added, "first wait till I address the meeting," and he made for the opening in the canvas through which the outside platform was reached. Stump oratory and a free fight was just the two temptations which Donovan was wholly unable to resist; and it was with a face radiant with devil-may-care delight that he burst through the opening, followed by all the rest (who felt that the matter was out of their hands, and must go its own way after the Irishman), and rolling to the front of the outside platform rested one hand on the rail, and waved the other gracefully towards the crowd. This was the signal for a burst of defiant shouts and hissing. Donovan stood blandly waving his hand for silence. Drysdale, running his eye over the mob, turned to the rest and said, "There's nothing to stop us, not twenty grown men in the whole lot." Then one of the men, lighting upon the drum-sticks, which the usual man in corduroys had hidden away, began beating the big drum furiously. One of the unaccountable whims which influence crowds seized on the mob, and there was almost perfect silence. This seemed to take Donovan by surprise; the open air was having the common effect on him; and he was getting unsteady on his legs, and his brains were wandering. "Now's your time, Donovan, my boy, begin."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, what'll I say? let's see," said Donovan, putting his head on one side —

"Friends, Romans, countrymen," suggested some wag.

"To be sure," cried Donovan; "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

"Bravo, Pat, well begun; pull their ears well when you've got 'em."

"Bad luck to it! where was I? you divels — I mean ladies and gentlemen of Oxford city as I was saying, the poets —"

Then the storm of shouting and hissing arose again, and Donovan, after an ineffectual attempt or two to go on, leaned forward and shook his fist generally at the mob. Luckily for him, there were no stones about; but one of the crowd, catching the first missile at hand, which happened to be a cabbage stalk, sent it with true aim at the enraged orator. He jerked his head on one side to avoid it; the motion unsteadied his cap; he threw up his hand, which, instead of catching the falling cap, as it was meant to do, sent it spinning among the crowd below. The owner, without a moment's hesitation, clapped both hands on the bar before him and followed his property, vaulting over on to the heads of those nearest the platform, amongst whom he fell, scattering them right and left.

"Come on, gown, or he'll be murdered," sang out one of Donovan's friends. Tom was one of the first down the steps; they rushed to the spot in another moment, and the Irishman rose, plastered with dirt, but otherwise none the worse for his feat; his cap, covered with mud, was proudly stuck on, hind part before. He was, of course, thirsting for battle, but not quite so much master of his strength as usual; so his two friends, who were luckily strong and big men, seized him, one to each arm.

"Come along, keep together," was the word; "there's no time to lose. Push for the corn-market."

The cry of "Town! town!" now rose on all sides.

The gownsmen in a compact body, with Donovan in the middle, pushed rapidly across the open space in which the caravans were set up and gained the street. Here they were comparatively safe: they were followed close, but could not be surrounded by the mob. And now again a bystander might have amused himself by noting the men's characters. Three or four pushed rapidly on, and were out of sight ahead in no time. The greater part, without showing any actual signs of fear, kept steadily on, at a good pace: close behind these, Donovan struggled violently with his two conductors, and shouted defiance to the town; while a small and silent rear-guard, amongst whom were Tom and Drysdale, walked slowly and, to all appearance, carelessly behind, within a few yards of the crowd of shouting boys who headed the advancing town. Tom himself felt his heart beating quick, and I don't think had any particular desire for the fighting to begin, with such long odds on the town side; but he was resolved to be in it as soon as any one if there was to be any. Thus they marched through one or two streets without any thing more serious than an occasional stone passing their ears. Another turn would have brought them into the open parts of the town, within hearing of the colleges, when suddenly Donovan broke loose from his supporters, and rushing with a shout on the advanced guard of the town, drove them back in confusion for some yards. The only thing to do was to back him up; so the rear-guard, shouting "Gown! gown!" charged after him. The effect of the onset was like that of Blount at Flodden, when he saw Marmion's banner go down,—a wide space was cleared for a moment, the town driven back, on to the pavements and up the middle of the street, and the rescued Donovan caught, set on his legs, and dragged away again some paces towards college. But the charging body was

too few in number to improve the first success, or even to insure its own retreat. "Darkly closed the war around." The town lapped on them from the pavements, and poured on them down the middle of the street, before they had time to rally and stand together again. What happened to the rest—who was down, who up, who fought, who fled,—Tom had no time to inquire; for he found himself suddenly the centre of a yelling circle of enemies. So he set his teeth and buckled to his work; and the thought of splendid single combat, and glory such as he had read of in college stories, and tradition handing him down as the hero of that great night, flashed into his head as he cast his eye round for foemen worthy of his steel. None such appeared; so, selecting the one most of his own size, he squared and advanced on him. But the challenged one declined the combat, and kept retreating; while from behind, and the sides, one after another of the "town" rushing out dealt Tom a blow and vanished again into the crowd.

For a moment or two he kept his head and temper; the assailants, individually, were too insignificant to put out his strength upon; but head and temper were rapidly going; he was like a bull in the arena, with the picadores sticking their little javelins in him. A smart blow on the nose, which set a myriad of stars dancing before his eyes, finished the business, and he rushed after the last assailant, dealing blows to right and left, on small and great. The mob closed in on him, still avoiding attacks in front, but on flank and rear they hung on him, and battered at him. He had to turn sharply round after every step to shake himself clear, and at each turn the press thickened, the shouts waxed louder and fiercer; he began to get unsteady; tottered, swayed, and, stumbling over a prostrate youth, at last went down full length on to the



pavement, carrying a couple of his assailants with him. And now it would have fared hard with him, and he would scarcely have reached college with sound bones, — for I am sorry to say an Oxford town mob is a cruel and brutal one, and a man who is down has no chance with them, — but that for one moment he and his prostrate foes were so jumbled together that the town could not get at him, and the next, the cry of “Gown! gown!” rose high above the din; the town were swept back again by the rush of a reinforcement of gownsmen, the leader of whom seized him by the shoulders and put him on his legs again; while his late antagonists crawled away to the side of the road.

“Why, Brown!” said his rescuer, — Jervis, the captain, — “this you? Not hurt, eh?”

“Not a bit,” said Tom.

“Good; come on, then; stick to me.”

In three steps they joined the rest of the gown, now numbering some twenty men. The mob was close before them, gathering for another rush. Tom felt a cruel, wild devil beginning to rise in him: he had never felt the like before. This time he longed for the next crash, which, happily for him, was fated never to come off.

“Your names and colleges, gentlemen,” said a voice close behind them, at this critical moment. The “town” set up a derisive shout, and, turning round, the gownsmen found the velvet sleeves of one of the proctors at their elbow, and his satellites, vulgarly called bulldogs, taking notes of them. They were completely caught, and so quietly gave the required information.

“You will go to your colleges at once,” said the proctor, “and remain within gates. You will see these gentlemen to the High Street,” he added to his marshal, and then

strode on after the crowd, which was vanishing down the street.

The men turned and strode towards the High Street, the marshal keeping, in a deferential but wide-awake manner, pretty close to them, but without making any show of watching them. When they reached the High Street, he touched his hat, and said, civilly, "I hope you will go home now, gentlemen; the senior proctor is very strict."

"All right, marshal; good-night," said the good-natured ones.

"D—his impudence," growled one or two of the rest, and the marshal hustled away after his master. The men looked at one another for a moment or two. They were of different colleges, and strangers. The High Street was quiet; so, without the exchange of a word, after the manner of British youth, they broke up into twos and threes, and parted. Jervis, Tom, and Drysdale, who turned up quite undamaged, sauntered together towards St. Ambrose's.

"I say, where are we going?" said Drysdale.

"Not to college, I vote," said Tom.

"No; there may be some more fun."

"Mighty poor fun, I should say, you'll find it," said Jervis; "however, if you will stay, I suppose I must. I can't leave you two boys by yourselves."

"Come along, then, down here." So they turned down one of the courts leading out of the High Street, and so, by back streets, bore up again for the disturbed districts.

"Mind and keep a sharp look-out for the proctors," said Jervis; "as much row as you please, but we mustn't be caught again."

"Well, only let's keep together, if we have to bolt."

They promenaded in lonely dignity for some five minutes, keeping eyes and ears on full strain.

"I tell you what," said Drysdale, at last, "it isn't fair, these enemies in the camp; what with 'the town' and their stones and fists, and the proctors with their 'name and college,' we've got the wrong end of the stick."

"Both wrong ends, I can tell you," said Jervis. "Hol-loa, Brown, your nose is bleeding."

"Is it?" said Tom, drawing his hand across his face; "'twas that confounded little fellow, then, who ran up to my side while I was squaring at the long party. I felt a sharp crack, and the little rascal bolted into the crowd before I could turn at him."

"Cut and come again," said Drysdale, laughing.

"Ay, that's the regular thing in these blackguard street squabbles. Here they come, then," said Jervis. "Steady, all."

They turned round to face the town, which came shouting down the street behind them, in pursuit of one gownsmen, a little, harmless, quiet fellow, who had fallen in with them on his way back to his college from a tea with his tutor, and, like a wise man, was giving them leg-bail as hard as he could foot it. But the little man was of a courageous, though prudent, soul, and turned, panting and gasping, on his foes the moment he found himself amongst friends again.

"Now, then, stick together; don't let them get around us," said Jervis.

They walked steadily down the street, which was luckily a narrow one, so that three of them could keep the whole of it, halting and showing front every few yards, when the crowd pressed too much. "Down with them! Town, town! That's two as was in the show." "Mark the velvet-capped chap. Town, town!" shouted the hinder part of the mob; but it was a rabble of boys, as

before, and the front rank took very good care of itself, and forbore from close quarters.

The small gownsman had now got his wind again, and, smarting under the ignominy of his recent flight, was always a pace or two nearer the crowd than the other three, ruffling up like a little bantam, and shouting defiance between the catchings of his breath.

"You vagabonds! you cowards! Come on now, I say! Gown, gown!" And at last, emboldened by the repeated halts of the mob, and thirsting for revenge, he made a dash at one of the nearest of the enemy. The suddenness of the attack took both sides by surprise, then came a rush by two or three of the town to the rescue.

"No, no! stand back — one at a time," shouted the captain, throwing himself between the combatants and the mob. "Go it, little 'un; serve him out. Keep the rest back, boys; steady!" Tom and Drysdale faced towards the crowd, while the little gownsman and his antagonist — who defended himself vigorously enough now — came to close quarters, in the rear of the gown line; too close to hurt one another, but what with hugging and cuffing, the townsman in another half-minute was sitting quietly on the pavement with his back against the wall, his enemy squaring in front of him, and daring him to renew the combat. "Get up, you coward; get up, I say, you coward! He wont get up," said the little man, eagerly turning to the captain. "Shall I give him a kick?"

"No, let the cur alone" replied Jervis. "Now, do any more of you want to fight? Come on, like men, one at a time. I'll fight any man in the crowd."

Whether the challenge would have been answered must rest uncertain; for now the crowd began to look back, and a cry arose, "Here they are, proctors! now they'll run."



"So we must, by Jove, Brown," said the captain. "What's your college?" to the little hero.

"Pembroke."

"Cut away, then; you're close at home."

"Very well, if I must; good-night," and away went the small man as fast as he had come; and I have never heard that he came to further grief or performed other feats that night not here set down.

"Hang it, don't let's run," said Drysdale.

"Is it the proctors?" said Tom. "I can't see them."

"Mark the bloody-faced one; kick him over," sang out a voice in the crowd.

"Thankee," said Tom, savagely. "Let's have one rush at them."

"Look! there's the proctor's cap just through them; come along, boys—well, stay if you like, and be rusticated, I'm off;" and away went Jervis, and the next moment Tom and Drysdale followed the good example, and as they had to run, made the best use of their legs, and in two minutes were well ahead of their pursuers. They turned a corner; "Here, Brown! a light in this public, cut in and it's all right." Next moment they were in the dark passage of a quiet little inn, and heard with a chuckle part of the crowd scurry by the door in pursuit, while they themselves suddenly appeared in the neat little bar, to the no small astonishment of its occupants. These were a stout, elderly woman in spectacles, who was stitching away at plain work in an arm-chair on one side of the fire; the foreman of one of the great boat-builders, who sat opposite her, smoking his pipe, with a long glass of clear ale at his elbow; and a bright-eyed, neat-handed barmaid, who was leaning against the table, and talking to the others as they entered.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CAPTAIN'S NOTIONS.

THE old lady dropped her work, the barmaid turned round with a start and little ejaculation, and the foreman stared with all his eyes for a moment, and then, jumping up, exclaimed, —

“Bless us, if it isn’t Muster Drysdale and Muster Brown, of Ambrose’s. Why, what’s the matter, sir? Muster Brown, you be all covered wi’ blood, sir.”

“Oh, dear me! poor young gentleman!” cried the hostess. “Here, Patty, run and tell Dick to go for the doctor, and get the best room!”

“No, please don’t; it’s nothing at all,” interrupted Tom, laughing. “A basin of cold water and a towel, if you please, Miss Patty, and I shall be quite presentable in a minute. I’m very sorry to have frightened you all.”

Drysdale joined in assurances that it was nothing but a little of his friend’s “claret,” which he would be all the better for losing, and watched with an envious eye the interest depicted in Patty’s pretty face, as she hurried in with a basin of fresh pumped water, and held the towel while Tom bathed his face, and very soon was as respectable a member of society as usual, save for a slight swelling on one side of his nose.

Drysdale, meantime, seated on the table, had been explaining the circumstances to the landlady and the foreman, whose reflections on the occasion I shall not trouble my readers with, though they were full of wisdom. “And

now, ma'am," said he, as Tom joined them and seated himself on a vacant chair, "I'm sure you must draw famous ale."

"Indeed, sir, I think Dick — that's my ostler, sir — is as good a brewer as is in the town. We always brews at home, sir, and I hope always shall."

"Quite right, ma'am, quite right," said Drysdale; "and I don't think we can do better than follow Jem, here. Let us have a jug of the same ale as he is drinking. And you'll take a glass with us, Jem? or will you have spirits?"

Jem was for another glass of ale, and bore witness to its being the best in Oxford, and Patty drew the ale, and supplied two more long glasses. Drysdale, with apologies, produced his cigar-case; and Jem, under the influence of the ale and a first-rate Havana (for which he deserted his pipe, though he did not enjoy it half as much), volunteered to go and rouse the yard and conduct them safely back to college. This offer was, of course, politely declined, and then, Jem's hour for bed having come, he, being a methodical man, as became his position, departed, and left our two young friends in sole possession of the bar. Nothing could have suited the two young gentlemen better, and they set to work to make themselves agreeable. They listened with lively interest to the landlady's statement of the difficulties of a widow woman in a house like hers, and to her praises of her factotum Dick and her niece Patty. They applauded her resolution of not bringing up her two boys in the publican line, though they could offer no very available advice in answer to her appeals for advice as to what trade they should be put to; all trades were so full, and things were not as they used to be. The one thing, apparently, which was wanting to the happiness of Drysdale at Oxford, was the discovery of such beer as he had at last found at "The Choughs." Dick

was to come up to St. Ambrose's the first thing in the morning and carry off his barrel, which would never contain in future any other liquid. At last that worthy appeared in the bar to know when he was to shut up, and was sent out by his mistress to see that the street was clear, for which service he received a shilling, though his offer of escort was declined. And so, after paying in a splendid manner for their entertainment, they found themselves in the street, and set off for college, agreeing on the way that "The Choughs" was a great find, the old lady the best old soul in the world, and Patty the prettiest girl in Oxford. They found the streets quiet, and walking quickly along them, knocked at the college gates at half-past eleven. The stout porter received them with a long face.

"Senior proctor's sent down here an hour back, gentlemen, to find whether you was in college."

"You don't mean that, porter? How kind of him! What did you say?"

"Said I didn't know, sir; but the marshal said, if you come in after that you was to go to the senior proctor's at half-past nine to-morrow."

"Send my compliments to the senior proctor," said Drysdale, "and say I've a very particular engagement to-morrow morning, which will prevent my having the pleasure of calling on him."

"Very good, sir," said the porter, giving a little dry chuckle, and tapping the keys against his leg; "only perhaps you wouldn't mind writing him a note, sir, as he's rather a particular gentleman."

"Didn't he send after any one else?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Jervis, sir."

"Well, and what about him?"



"O sir, Mr. Jervis! an old hand, sir. He'd been in gates a long time, sir, when the marshal came."

"The sly old beggar!" said Drysdale. "Good-night, porter. Mind you send my message to the proctor. If he is set on seeing me to-morrow, you can say that he'll find a broiled chicken and a hand at picquet in my rooms, if he likes to drop in to lunch."

The porter looked after them for a moment, and then retired to his deep old chair in the lodge, pulled his night-cap over his ears, put up his feet before the fire on a high stool, and folded his hand on his lap. "The most impudentest thing on the face of the earth is a gen'l'man-commoner in his first year," soliloquized the little man. "'Twould ha' done that one a sight of good, now, if he'd got a good hiding in the street, to-night. But he's better than most on 'em, too," he went on; "uncommon free with his tongue, but just as free with his half-sovereigns. Well, I'm not going to peach, if the proctor don't send again in the morning. That sort's good for the college; makes things brisk; has his *wind* from town, and don't keep no keys. I wonder, now, if my Peter's been out fighting. He's pretty nigh as hard to manage, is that boy, as if he was at college hisself."

And so, muttering over his domestic and professional grievances, the small janitor composed himself to a nap. I may add, parenthetically, that his hopeful Peter, a precocious youth of seventeen, scout's boy on No. 3 Staircase of St. Ambrose's College, was represented in the boot-cleaning and errand line by a substitute for some days; and when he returned to duty was minus a front tooth.

"What fools we were not to stick to the captain. I wonder what we shall get," said Tom, who was troubled in his mind at the proctor's message, and not gifted natu-

rally with the recklessness and contempt of authority which in Drysdale's case approached the sublime.

"Who cares? I'll be bound now the old fox came straight home to earth. Let's go and knock him up."

Tom assented, for he was anxious to consult Jervis as to his proceedings in the morning; so they soon found themselves drumming at his oak, which was opened shortly by the stroke in an old boating-jacket. They followed him in. At one end of his table stood his tea-service and the remains of his commons, which the scout had not cleared away; at the other, open books, note-books, and maps showed that the captain read, as he rowed, "hard all."

"Well, are you two only just in?"

"Only just, my captain," answered Drysdale.

"Have you been well thrashed, then? You don't look much damaged."

"We are innocent of fight since your sudden departure — fight, shall I call it? — my captain."

"Where have you been, then?"

"Where! why in the paragon of all pothouses; snug little bar with red curtains; stout old benevolent female in spectacles; barmaid a houri; and for malt, the most touching tap in Oxford — home-brewed, too, wasn't it, Brown?"

"Yes, the beer was undeniable," said Tom.

"Well, and you dawdled there till now?" said Jervis.

"Even so. What with mobs that wouldn't fight fair, and captains who would run away, and proctors and marshals who would interfere, we were 'perfectly disgusted with the whole proceeding,' as the Scotchman said when he was sentenced to be hanged."

"Well, Heaven, they say, protects children, sailors, and

drunken men ; and whatever answers to Heaven in the academical system protects freshmen," remarked Jervis.

"Not us, at any rate," said Tom, "for we are to go to the proctor to-morrow morning."

"What, did he catch you in your famous public?"

"No ; the marshal came round to the porter's lodge, asked if we were in, and left word that, if we were not, we were to go to him in the morning. The porter told us just now as we came in."

"Pshaw," said the captain, with disgust ; "now you'll both be gated probably, and the whole crew will be thrown out of gear. Why couldn't you have come home when I did?"

"We do not propose to attend the levee of that excellent person in office to-morrow morning," said Drysdale. "He will forget all about it. Old Copas wont say a word — catch him. He gets too much out of me for that."

"Well, you'll see ; I'll back the proctor's memory."

"But, captain, what are you going to stand?"

"Stand ! nothing, unless you like a cup of cold tea. You'll get no wine or spirits here at this time of night, and the buttery is shut. Besides, you've had quite as much beer as is good for you at your paragon public."

"Come, now, captain, just two glasses of sherry, and I'll promise to go to bed."

"Not a thimbleful."

"You old tyrant !" said Drysdale, hopping off his perch on the elbow of the sofa. "Come along, Brown, let's go and draw for some supper and a hand at Van John. There's sure to be some going up my staircase ; or at any rate, there's a cool bottle of claret in my rooms."

"Stop and have a talk, Brown," said the captain, and prevailed against Drysdale, who, after another attempt to draw Tom off, departed on his quest for drink and cards.

"He'll never do for the boat, I'm afraid," said the captain; "with his rascally late hours, and drinking, and eating all sorts of trash one atop of the other. It's a pity, too, for he's a pretty oar for his weight."

"He is such uncommon good company, too," said Tom.

"Yes; but I'll tell you what. He's just a leetle too good company for you and me, or any fellows who mean to take a degree. Let's see, this is only his third term? I'll give him, perhaps, two more to make the place too hot to hold him. Take my word for it, he'll never get to his little go."

"It will be a great pity, then," said Tom.

"So it will. But after all, you see, what does it matter to him? He gets rusticated; takes his name off with a flourish of trumpets — what then? He falls back on £5,000 a year in land, and a good accumulation in consols; runs abroad, or lives in town for a year. Takes the hounds when he comes of age, or is singled out by some discerning constituency, and sent to make laws for his country, having spent the whole of his life hitherto in breaking all the laws he ever came under. You and I, perhaps, go fooling about with him, and get rusticated. We make our friends miserable. We can't take our names off, but have to come cringing back at the end of our year, marked men. Keep our tails between our legs for the rest of our time. Lose a year at our professions, and most likely have the slip casting up against us in one way or another for the next twenty years. It's like the old story of the giant and the dwarf, or like fighting a sweep, or any other one-sided business."

"But I'd sooner have to fight my own way in the world after all; wouldn't you?" said Tom.

"H—m—m!" said the captain, throwing himself back in his chair, and smiling; "can't answer offhand. I'm a



third-year man, and begin to see the other side rather clearer than I did when I was a freshman like you. Three years at Oxford, my boy, will teach you something of what rank and money count for, if they teach you nothing else."

"Why, here's the captain singing the same song as Hardy," thought Tom.

"So you two have to go to the proctor to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Shall you go? Drysdale wont."

"Of course I shall. It seems to me childish not to go; as if I were back in the lower school again. To tell you the truth, the being sent for isn't pleasant; but the other I couldn't stand."

"Well, I don't feel any thing of that sort. But I think you're right on the whole. The chances are that he'll remember your name, and send for you again, if you don't go; and then you'll be worse off."

"You don't think he'll rusticate us, or any thing of that sort?" said Tom, who had felt horrible twinges at the captain's picture of the effects of rustication on ordinary mortals.

"No; not unless he's in a very bad humor. I was caught three times in one night in my freshman's term, and only got an imposition."

"Then I don't care," said Tom. "But it's a bore to have been caught in so seedy an affair; if it had been a real good row, one wouldn't have minded so much."

"Why, what did you expect? It was neither better nor worse than the common run of such things."

"Well, but three parts of the crowd were boys."

"So they are always—or nine times out of ten, at any rate."

"But there was no real fighting: at least, I only know I got none."

"There isn't any real fighting as you call it, nine times out of ten."

"What is there then?"

"Why something of this sort. Five shopboys or scouts' boys, full of sauciness, loitering at an out-of-the-way street corner. Enter two freshmen, full of dignity and bad wine. Explosion of inflammable material. Freshmen mobbed into High Street or Broad Street, where the tables are turned by the gathering of many more freshmen, and the mob of town boys quietly subsides, puts its hands in its pockets, and ceases to shout 'Town, town!' The triumphant freshmen march up and down for perhaps half an hour, shouting 'Gown, gown,' and looking furious, but not half sorry that the mob vanishes like mist at their approach. Then come the proctors, who hunt down, and break up the gown in some half-hour or hour. The 'town' again marches about in the ascendant, and mobs the scattered freshmen, wherever they can be caught, in very small numbers."

"But with all your chaff about freshmen, captain, you were in it yourself to-night; come, now."

"Of course, I had to look after you two boys."

"But you didn't know we were in it when you came up."

"I was sure to find some of you. Besides, I'll admit one don't like to go in while there's any chance of a real row, as you call it, and so gets proctorized in one's old age for one's patriotism."

"Were you ever in a real row?" said Tom.

"Yes, once, about a year ago. The fighting numbers were about equal, and the town all grown men, laborers and mechanics. It was desperate hard work, none of your shouting and promenading. That Hardy, one of our Bible clerks, fought like a Paladin; I know I shifted a fellow in

corduroys on to him, whom I had found an uncommon tough customer, and never felt better pleased in my life than when I saw the light glance on his hobnails as he went over into the gutter two minutes afterwards. It lasted, perhaps, ten minutes, and both sides were very glad to draw off."

"But of course you licked them?"

"We said we did."

"Well, I believe that a gentleman will always lick in a fair fight."

"Of course you do; it's the orthodox belief."

"But don't you?"

"Yes, if he is as big and strong, and knows how to fight as well as the other. The odds are that he cares a little more for giving in, and that will pull him through."

"That isn't saying much, though."

"No, but it's quite as much as is true. I'll tell you what it is, I think just this, that we are generally better in the fighting way than shopkeepers, clerks, flunkies, and all fellows who don't work hard with their bodies all day. But the moment you come to the real hard-fisted fellow, used to nine or ten hours' work a day, he's a cruel hard customer. Take seventy or eighty of them at haphazard, the first you meet, and turn them into St. Ambrose any morning — by night I take it they would be lords of this venerable establishment, if we had to fight for the possession: except, perhaps, for that Hardy; he's one of a thousand, and was born for a fighting man; perhaps he might pull us through."

"Why don't you try him in the boat?"

"Miller manages all that. I spoke to him about it after that row, but he said that Hardy had refused to subscribe to the club, said he couldn't afford it, or something of the

sort. I don't see why that need matter, myself, but I suppose, as we have rules, we ought to stick to them."

"It's a great pity, though. I know Hardy well, and you can't think what a fine fellow he is."

"I'm sure of that. I tried to know him, and we don't get on badly as speaking acquaintance. But he seems a queer, solitary bird."

Twelve o'clock struck; so Tom wished the captain good-night and departed, meditating much on what he had heard and seen, but not yet quite persuaded to give up his romantic beliefs as to town and gown rows.

The reader, too, will be outraged, no doubt, and will demur to the prosaic, not to say vulgar, sketch here submitted to him. He will resent the absence of terrific single combats, in which the descendant of a hundred earls polishes off the huge representative of the masses in the most finished style, without a scratch on his own aristocratic features.

Well, well! a man can only describe what he has seen with his own eyes and known in his own heart — at least, if he is a true man.

At any rate, Tom went to bed that night fairly sickened with his experience of a town and gown row, and with a nasty taste in his mouth. But he felt much pleased at having drawn out the captain so completely; for the stroke was in general a man of marvellous few words, having many better uses than talking to put his breath to.

Next morning Tom attended at the proctor's rooms at the appointed time, not without some feeling of shame at having to do so; which, however, wore off when he found some dozen men of other colleges waiting about on the same errand as himself. In his turn, he was ushered in, and, as he stood by the door, had time to look the great man over as he sat making a note of the case he had just



disposed of. The inspection was re-assuring. The proctor was a gentlemanly, straightforward-looking man of about thirty, not at all donnish, and his address answered to his appearance.

"Mr. Brown, of St. Ambrose's, I think," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"I sent you to your college yesterday evening; did you go straight home?"

"No, sir."

"How was that, Mr. Brown?"

Tom made no answer, and the proctor looked at him steadily for a few seconds, and then repeated, —

"How was that?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, "I don't mean to say I was going straight to college, but I should have been in long before you sent, only I fell in with the mob again, and then there was a cry that you were coming. And so —" He paused.

"Well," said the proctor, with a grim sort of curl about the corners of his mouth.

"Why, I ran away, and turned into the first place which was open, and stopped till the streets were quiet."

"A public house, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; the 'Choughs.'"

The proctor considered a minute, and again scrutinized Tom's look and manner, which certainly were straightforward and without any tinge of cringing or insolence.

"How long have you been up?"

"This is my second term, sir."

"You have never been sent to me before, I think?"

"Never, sir."

"Well, I can't overlook this, as you yourself confess to a direct act of disobedience. You must write me out two hundred lines of Virgil. And now, Mr. Brown, let me

advise you to keep out of these disreputable street quarrels in future. Good-morning."

Tom hurried away, wondering what it would feel like to be writing out Virgil again as a punishment at his time of life, but glad above measure that the proctor had asked him no questions about his companion. That hero was, of course, mightily tickled at the result, and seized the occasion to lecture Tom on his future conduct, holding himself up as a living example of the benefits which were sure to accrue to a man who never did any thing he was told to do. The soundness of his reasoning, however, was somewhat shaken by the dean, who, on that same afternoon, managed to catch him in quad; and, carrying him off, discoursed with him concerning his various and systematic breaches of discipline, pointed out to him that he had already made such good use of his time that if he were to be discommensed for three days more he would lose his term; and then took off his cross, gave him a book of Virgil to write out, and gated him for a fortnight after hall. Drysdale sent out his scout to order his punishment as he might have ordered a waistcoat, presented old Copas with a half-sovereign, and then dismissed punishment and gating from his mind at once. He cultivated with great success the science of mental gymnastics, or throwing every thing the least unpleasant off his mind at once. And I cannot but allow that it is a science worthy of all cultivation, if one desires to lead a comfortable life. It gets harder, however, as the years roll over us, to attain to any satisfactory proficiency in it; so that it should be mastered as early in life as may be.

The town and gown row was the talk of the college for the next week. Tom, of course, talked much about it, like his neighbors, and confided to one and another the captain's heresies. They were all incredulous; for no one

had ever heard him talk as much in a term as Tom reported him to have done on this one evening.

So it was resolved that he should be taken to task on the subject on the first opportunity, and as nobody was afraid of him, there was no difficulty in finding the man to bell the cat. Accordingly, at the next wine of the boating set, the captain had scarcely entered when he was assailed by the host with —

“Jervis, Brown says you don’t believe a gentlemen can lick a cad, unless he is the biggest and strongest of the two.”

The captain who hated coming out with his beliefs, shrugged his shoulders, sipped his wine, and tried to turn the subject. But, seeing that they were all bent on drawing him out, he was not the man to run from his guns; and so said, quietly,—

“No more I do.”

Notwithstanding the reverence in which he was held, this saying could not be allowed to pass, and a dozen voices were instantly raised, and a dozen authentic stories told to confute him. He listened patiently and then, seeing that he was in for it, said,—

“Never mind fighting. Try something else; cricket, for instance. The players generally beat the gentlemen; don’t they?”

“Yes; but they are professionals.”

“Well, and we don’t often get a university crew which can beat the watermen.”

“Professionals again.”

“I believe the markers are the best tennis-players, aint they?” persevered the captain; “and I generally find keepers and huntsmen shooting and riding better than their masters; don’t you?”

“But that’s not fair. All the cases you put are those

of men who have nothing else to do, who live by the things which gentlemen only take up for pleasure."

"I only say that the cads, as you call them, manage somehow or another, to do them best," said the captain.

"How about the army and navy? The officers always lead."

"Well, there they're all professionals, at any rate," said the captain. "I admit the officers lead; but the men follow pretty close. And in a forlorn hope there are fifty men to one officer, after all."

"But they must be led. The men will never go without an officer to lead."

"It's the officers' business to lead, I know; and they do it. But you won't find the best judges talking as if the men wanted much leading. Read Napier: the finest story in his book is of the sergeant who gave his life for his boy officer's — your namesake, Brown at the Coa."

"Well, I never thought to hear you crying down gentlemen."

"I'm not crying down gentlemen," said the captain. "I only say that a gentleman's flesh and blood and brains are just the same, and no better, than another man's. He has all the chances on his side in the way of training, and pretty near all the prizes; so it would be hard if he didn't do most things better than poor men. But give them the chance of training, and they will tread on his heels soon enough. That's all I say."

That was all, certainly, that the captain said, and then relapsed into his usual good-tempered, monosyllabic state; from which all the eager talk of the dozen men, who took up the cudgels naturally enough for their own class, and talked themselves, before the wine broke up, into a renewed consciousness of their natural superiority, failed again to rouse him.



This was, in fact, the captain's weak point, if he had one. He had strong beliefs himself; one of the strongest of which was, that nobody could be taught any thing except by his own experience; so he never, or very rarely, exercised his own personal influence, but just quietly went his own way, and let men go theirs. Another of his beliefs was, that there was no man or thing in the world too bad to be tolerated; faithfully acting up to which belief, the captain himself tolerated persons and things intolerable.

Bearing which facts in mind, the reader will easily guess the result of the application which the crew duly made to him the day after Miller's back was turned. He simply said that the training they proposed would not be enough, and that he himself should take all who chose to go down to Abingdon twice a week. From that time there were many defaulters; and the spirit of Diogenes groaned within him, as day after day the crew had to be filled up from the torpid or by watermen. Drysdale would ride down to Sanford, meeting the boat on its way up, and then take his place for the pull up to Oxford, while his groom rode his horse up to Folly bridge to meet him; there he would mount again, and ride off to Bullingdon, or to the Isis, or Quentin, or other social meeting equally inimical to good training. Blake often absented himself three days in a week, and other men once or twice.

From considering which facts, Tom came to understand the difference between his two heroes; their strong likeness in many points he had seen from the first. They were alike in truthfulness, bravery, bodily strength, and in most of their opinions. But Jervis worried himself about nothing, and let all men and things alone, in the belief that the world was not going so very wrong, or would right itself somehow without him. Hardy, on the other

hand, was consuming his heart over every thing that seemed to him to be going wrong in himself and round about him — in the college, in Oxford, in England, in the ends of the earth, and never letting slip a chance of trying to set right, here a thread, and there a thread ; a self-questioning, much-enduring man ; a slayer of dragons himself, and one with whom you could not live much without getting uncomfortably aware of the dragons which you also had to slay.

What wonder that, apart altogether from the difference in their social position, the one man was ever becoming more and more popular, while the other was left more and more to himself. There are few of us, I believe, at Oxford, or elsewhere, who do not like to see a man living a brave and righteous life, so long as he keeps clear of them, and still fewer who *do* like to be in constant contact with one who, not content with so living himself, is always coming across them, and laying bare to them their own faint-heartedness and sloth and meanness. The latter, I admit, inspires the deeper feeling, and lays hold with a firmer grip of the men he does lay hold of, but they are few. For men can't keep always up to high pressure till they have found firm ground to build upon, altogether outside of themselves ; and it is hard to be thankful and fair to those who are showing us time after time that our foothold is nothing but shifting sand.

The contrast between Jervis and Hardy now began to force itself daily more and more on our hero's attention. From the night of the town and gown row, "The Choughs" became a regular haunt of the St. Ambrose crew, who were taken there under the guidance of Tom and Drysdale the next day. Not content with calling there on his way from the boats, there was seldom a evening now that Tom did not manage to drop in and spend an hour there.

When one is very much bent on doing a thing, it is generally easy enough to find very good reasons, or excuses at any rate, for it; and whenever any doubts crossed Tom's mind, he silenced them by the reflection that the time he spent at "The Choughs" would otherwise have been devoted to wine parties or billiards; and it was not difficult to persuade himself that his present occupation was the more wholesome of the two. He could not, however, feel satisfied till he had mentioned his change in life to Hardy. This he found a much more embarrassing matter than he had fancied it would be. But after one or two false starts, he managed to get out, that he had found the best glass of ale in Oxford, at a quiet little public on the way to the boats, kept by the most perfect of old widows, with a factotum of an ostler, who was a regular character, and that he went there most evenings for a hour or so. Wouldn't Hardy come some night?

No, Hardy couldn't spare the time.

Tom felt rather relieved at this answer, but, nevertheless, went on to urge the excellence of the ale as a further inducement.

"I don't believe it's half so good as our college beer, and I'll be bound it's half as dear again."

"Only a penny a pint dearer," said Tom; "that wont ruin you. All the crew go there."

"If I were the captain," said Hardy, "I wouldn't let you run about drinking ale at night after wine parties. Does he know about it?"

"Yes, and goes there himself often on his way from the boats," said Tom.

"And at night, too?" said Hardy.

"No," said Tom; "but I don't go there after drinking wine; I haven't been to a wine this ten days, at least, not for more than five minutes."

“Well, sound ale is better than Oxford wine,” said Hardy, “if you must drink something.” And so the subject dropped.

And Tom went away, satisfied that Hardy had not disapproved of his new habit. It certainly occurred to him that he had omitted all mention of the pretty barmaid in his enumeration of the attractions of “The Choughs,” but this he set down to mere accident; it was a slip which he would set right in their next talk. But that talk never came, and the subject was not again mentioned between them. In fact, to tell the truth, Tom’s visits to his friend’s room in the evenings became shorter and less frequent as “The Choughs” absorbed more and more of his time. He made excuses to himself that Hardy must be glad of more time, and would be only bored if he kept dropping in every night, now that the examination for degree was so near; that he was sure he drove Grey away, who would be of much more use to Hardy just now. These, and many other plausible reasons suggested themselves whenever his conscience smote him for his neglect, as it did not seldom; and he always managed to satisfy himself somehow, without admitting the real fact, that these visits were no longer what they had been to him, that a gulf had sprung up and was widening day by day between him and the only friend who would have had the courage and honesty to tell him the truth about his new pursuit. Meantime, Hardy was much pained at the change in his friend, which *he* saw quickly enough, and often thought over it with a sigh as he sat at his solitary tea, and set it down to his own dulness, to the number of new friends whom such a sociable fellow as Tom was sure to make, and who, of course, would take up more and more of his time; and, if he felt a little jealousy every now and then, put it res-



olutely back, struggling to think no evil, or if there were any, to lay it on his own shoulders.

Cribbage is a most virtuous and respectable game, and yet scarcely, one would think, possessing in itself sufficient attractions to keep a young gentleman in his twentieth year tied to the board, and going through the quaint calculation night after night of "fifteen two, fifteen four, two for his nob, and one for his heels." The landlady of "The Choughs" liked nothing so much as her game of cribbage in the evenings, and the board lay ready on the little table by her elbow in the cozy bar, a sure stepping-stone to her good graces. Tom somehow became an enthusiast in cribbage, and would always loiter behind his companions for his quiet game; chatting pleasantly while the old lady cut and shuffled the dirty pack, striving keenly for the nightly stake of sixpence, which he seldom failed to lose, and laughingly wrangling with her over the last points in the game, which decided the transfer of the two sixpences (duly posted in the snuffer-tray beside the cribbage-board) into his waistcoat pocket or her bag, until she would take off her spectacles to wipe them, and sink back in her chair exhausted with the pleasing excitement.

Such an odd taste as it seemed, too, a bystander might reasonably have thought, when he might have been employing his time so much more pleasantly in the very room. For, flitting in and out of the bar during the game, and every now and then stooping over the old lady's shoulder to examine her hand and exchange knowing looks with her, was the lithe little figure of Miss Patty, with her oval face, and merry eyes, and bright brown hair, and jaunty little cap, with fresh blue ribbons of the shade of the St. Ambrose colors. However, there is no accounting for tastes, and it is fortunate that some like apples and

some onions. It may possibly be, too, that Miss Patty did not feel herself neglected, or did not care about attention. Perhaps she may not have been altogether unconscious that every least motion and word of hers was noticed, even when the game was at its keenest. At any rate, it was clear enough that she and Tom were on the best terms, though she always took her aunt's part vehemently in any little dispute which arose, and sometimes even came to the rescue at the end, and recaptured the vanished six-pences out of the wrongful grasp which he generally laid on them the moment the old lady held out her hand and pronounced the word "game." One knows that size has little to do with strength, or one might have wondered that her little hands should have been able to open his fingers so surely one by one, though he seemed to do all he could to keep them shut. But, after all, if he really thought he had a right to the money, he had always time to put it in his pocket at once, instead of keeping his clenched hand on the table, and arguing about till she had time to get up to the succor of her aunt.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FIRST BUMP.

"WHAT'S the time, Smith?"

"Half-past three, old fellow," answered Diogenes, looking at his watch.

"I never knew a day go so slowly," said Tom; "isn't it time to go down to the boats?"

"Not by two hours and more, old fellow. Can't you take a book, or something, to keep you quiet? You won't be fit for any thing by six o'clock, if you go on worrying like this." And so Diogenes turned himself to his flute, and blew away, to all appearances as composedly as if it had been the first week of term, though, if the truth must be told, it was all he could do not to get up and wander about in a feverish and distracted state, for Tom's restlessness infected him.

Diogenes' whole heart was in the college boat: and so, though he had pulled dozens of races in his time, he was almost as nervous as a freshman on this the first day of the races. Tom, all unconscious of the secret discomposure of the other, threw himself into a chair, and looked at him with wonder and envy. The flute went "toot, toot, toot," till he could stand it no longer; so he got up and went to the window, and, leaning out, looked up and down the street for some minutes in a purposeless sort of fashion, staring hard at everybody and every thing, but unconscious all the time that he was doing so. He would not have been able, in fact, to answer Diogenes a word, had that

worthy inquired of him what he had seen, when he presently drew in his head and returned to his fidgety ramblings about the room.

"How hot the sun is! but there's a stiff breeze from the south-east. I hope it will go down before the evening; don't you?"

"Yes; this wind will make it very rough below the Gut. Mind you feather high now at starting."

"I hope to goodness I sha'n't catch a crab," said Tom.

"Don't think about it, old fellow; that's your best plan."

"But I can't think of any thing else," said Tom. "What the deuce is the good of telling a fellow not to think about it?"

Diogenes, apparently, had nothing particular to reply, for he put his flute to his mouth again; and at the sound of the "toot, toot," Tom caught up his gown and fled away into the quadrangle.

The crew had had their early dinner of steaks and chops, stale bread, and a glass and a half of old beer apiece, at two o'clock, in the captain's rooms. The current theory of training at that time was — as much meat as you could eat, the more underdone the better, and the smallest amount of drink upon which you could manage to live. Two pints in the twenty-four hours was all that most boats' crews that pretended to train at all were allowed, and for the last fortnight it had been the nominal allowance of the St. Ambrose crew. The discomfort of such a diet in the hot summer months, when you were at the same time taking regular and violent exercise, was something very serious. Outraged human nature rebelled against it; and, I take it, though they did not admit it in public, there were very few men who did not rush to their water-bottles for relief, more or less often, according to the



development of their bumps of conscientiousness and obstinacy. To keep to the diet at all strictly, involved a very respectable amount of physical endurance. I am thankful to hear that our successors have found out the unwisdom of this, as of other old superstitions, and that in order to get a man into training for a boat-race now-a-days, it is not thought of the first importance to keep him in a constant state of consuming thirst, and the restlessness of body and sharpness of temper which thirst generally induces.

Tom appreciated the honor of being in the boat in his first year so keenly, that he had almost managed to keep to his training allowance, and consequently, now that the eventful day had arrived, was in a most uncomfortable state of body and disagreeable frame of mind.

He fled away from Diogenes' flute, but found no rest. He tried Drysdale. That hero was lying on his back on his sofa playing with Jack, and only increased Tom's thirst and soured his temper by the viciousness of his remarks on boating, and every thing and person connected therewith; above all, on Miller, who had just come up, had steered them the day before, and pronounced the crew generally, and Drysdale in particular, "not half trained."

Blake's oak was sported, as usual. Tom looked in at the captain's door, but found him hard at work reading, and so carried himself off; and, after a vain hunt after others of the crew, and even trying to sit down and read, first a novel, then a play of Shakspeare, with no success whatever, wandered away out of the college, and found himself in five minutes, by a natural and irresistible attraction, on the university barge.

There were half a dozen men or so reading the papers, and a group or two discussing the coming races. Amongst other things, the chances of St. Ambrose's making a bump

the first night were weighed. Every one joined in praising the stroke, but there were great doubts whether the crew could live up to it. Tom carried himself on to the top of the barge to get out of hearing, for listening made his heart beat and his throat dryer than ever. He stood on the top and looked right away down to the Gut, the strong wind blowing his gown about. Not even a pair oar was to be seen; the great event of the evening made the river a solitude at this time of day. Only one or two skiffs were coming home, impelled by reading men, who took their constitutionals on the water, and were coming in to be in time for afternoon chapel. The fastest and best of these soon came near enough for Tom to recognize Hardy's stroke: so he left the barge and went down to meet the servitor at his landing, and accompanied him to the St. Ambrose dressing-room.

"Well, how do you feel for the race to-night?" said Hardy, as he dried his neck and face, which he had been sluicing with cold water, looking as hard and bright as a racer on Derby day.

"Oh, wretched! I'm afraid I shall break down," said Tom, and poured out some of his doubts and miseries. Hardy soon comforted him greatly; and by the time they were half across Christchurch Meadow he was quite in heart again, for he knew how well Hardy understood rowing, and what a sound judge he was, and it was therefore cheering to hear that he thought they were certainly the second best, if not the best, boat on the river, and that they would be sure to make some bumps unless they had accidents.

"But that's just what I fear so," said Tom. "I'm afraid I shall make some awful blunder."

"Not you!" said Hardy; "only remember; don't you fancy you can pull the boat by yourself, and go trying to

do it. That's where young oars fail. If you keep thorough good time you'll be pretty sure to be doing your share of work. Time is every thing, almost."

"I'll be sure to think of that," said Tom. And they entered St. Ambrose just as the chapel bell was going down, and he went to chapel and then to hall, sitting by and talking for companionship while the rest dined.

And so at last the time slipped away, and the captain and Miller mustered them at the gates and walked off to the boats. A dozen other crews were making their way in the same direction, and half the undergraduates of Oxford streamed along with them. The banks of the river were crowded; and the punts plied rapidly backwards and forwards, carrying loads of men over to the Berkshire side. The University barge, and all the other barges, were decked with flags, and the band was playing lively airs as the St. Ambrose crew reached the scene of action.

No time was lost in the dressing-room, and in two minutes they were all standing in flannel trousers and silk jerseys at the landing-place.

"You had better keep your jackets on," said the captain; "we sha'n't be off yet."

"There goes Brazen-nose."

"They look like work; don't they?"

"The black and yellow seems to slip along so fast. They've no end of good colors. I wish our new boat was black."

"Hang her colors, if she's only stiff in the back, and don't dip."

"Well, she didn't dip yesterday. At least, the men on the bank said so."

"There go Balliol and Oriel and University."

"By Jove, we shall be late! Where's Miller?"

"In the shed getting the boat out. Look, here's Exeter."

The talk of the crew was silenced for the moment as every man looked eagerly at the Exeter boat. The captain nodded to Jervis with a grim smile as they paddled gently by.

Then the talk began again.

"How do you think she goes?"

"Not so badly. They're very strong in the middle of the boat."

"Not a bit of it; it's all lumber."

"You'll see. They're better trained than we are. They look as fine as stars."

"So they ought. They've pulled seven miles to our five for the last month, I'm sure."

"Then we sha'n't bump them."

"Why not?"

"Don't you know that the value of products consists in the quantity of labor which goes to produce them? Product, pace over course from Iffley up. Labor expended, Exeter, 7; St. Ambrose, 5. You see it is not in the nature of things that we should bump them. — Q.E.D."

"What moonshine! as if ten miles behind their stroke are worth two behind Jervis!"

"My dear fellow, it isn't my moonshine; you must settle the matter with the philosophers. I only apply a universal law to a particular case."

Tom, unconscious of the pearls of economic lore which were being poured out for the benefit of the crew, was watching the Exeter eight as it glided away towards the Cherwell. He thought they seemed to keep horribly good time.

"Holloa, Drysdale! look; there's Jack going across in one of the punts."



"Of course he is. You don't suppose he wouldn't go down to see the race."

"Why won't Miller let us start? Almost all the boats are off."

"There's plenty of time. We may just as well be up here as dawdling about the bank at Iffley."

"We sha'n't go down till the last; Miller never lets us get out down below."

"Well, come; here's the boat, at last."

The new boat now emerged from its shed, guided steadily to where they were standing by Miller and a waterman. Then the coxswain got out and called for bow, who stepped forward.

"Mind how you step, now; there are no bottom boards, remember," said Miller.

"Shall I take my jacket?"

"Yes; you had better all go down in jackets in this wind. I've sent a man down to bring them back. Now, two."

"Aye, aye!" said Drysdale, stepping forward. Then came Tom's turn, and soon the boat was manned.

"Now," said Miller, taking his place, "are all your stretchers right?"

"I should like a little more greese for my rollocks."

"I'm taking some down; we'll put it on down below. Are you all right?"

"Yes."

"Then push her off—gently."

The St. Ambrose boat was almost the last, so there were no punts in the way, or other obstructions; and they swung steadily down past the University barge, the top of which was already covered with spectators. Every man in the boat felt as if the eyes of Europe were on him, and pulled in his very best form. Small groups of gowns-

men were scattered along the bank in Christchurch meadow, chiefly dons, who were really interested in the races, but, at that time of day, seldom liked to display enthusiasm enough to cross the water and go down to the starting-place. These sombre groups were lightened up here and there by the dresses of a few ladies, who were walking up and down, and watching the boats. At the mouth of the Cherwell were moored two punts, in which reclined at their ease some dozen young gentlemen, smoking; several of these were friends of Drysdale, and hailed him as the boat passed them.

"What a fool I am to be here!" he grumbled, in an undertone, casting an envious glance at the punts in their comfortable berth, up under the banks, and out of the wind. "I say, Brown, don't you wish we were well past this on the way up?"

"Silence in the bows!" shouted Miller.

"You devil, how I hate you!" growled Drysdale, half in jest and half in earnest, as they sped along under the willows.

Tom got more comfortable at every stroke, and by the time they reached the Gut began to hope that he should not have a fit, or lose all his strength just at the start, or cut a crab, or come to some other unutterable grief, the fear of which had been haunting him all day.

"Here they are at last! — come along now — keep up with them," said Hardy to Grey, as the boat neared the Gut; and the two who had been waiting on the bank, trotted along downwards, Hardy watching the crew, and Grey watching him.

"Hardy, how eager you look!"

"I'd give twenty pounds to be going to pull in the race."

Grey shambled on in silence by the side of his big friend,

and wished he could understand what it was that moved him so.

As the boat shot into the Gut from under the cover of the Oxfordshire bank, the wind caught the bows.

"Feather high, now," shouted Miller; and then added in a low voice to the captain, "It will be ticklish work starting in this wind."

"Just as bad for all the other boats," answered the captain.

"Well said, old philosopher!" said Miller. "It's a comfort to steer you; you never make a fellow nervous. I wonder if you ever felt nervous yourself, now?"

"Can't say," said the captain. "Here's our post; we may as well turn."

"Easy, bow side — now, two and four, pull her round — back water, seven and five!" shouted the coxswain; and the boat's head swung round, and two or three strokes took into the bank.

Jack instantly made a convulsive attempt to board, but was sternly repulsed, and tumbled backwards into the water.

Hark! — the first gun. The report sent Tom's heart into his mouth again. Several of the boats pushed off at once into the stream; and the crowds of men on the bank began to be agitated, as it were, by the shadow of the coming excitement. The St. Ambrose fingered their oars, put a last dash of grease on their rollocks, and settled their feet against the stretchers.

"Shall we push her off?" asked bow.

"No; I can give you another minute," said Miller, who was sitting, watch in hand, in the stern; "only be smart when I give the word."

The captain turned on his seat, and looked up the boat. His face was quiet, but full of confidence, which seemed to

pass from him into the crew. Tom felt calmer and stronger, as he met his eye. "Now mind, boys, don't quicken," he said, cheerily; "four short strokes to get way on her, and then steady. Here, pass up the lemon."

And he took a sliced lemon out of his pocket, put a small piece in his own mouth, and then handed it to Blake, who followed his example, and passed it on. Each man took a piece; and just as bow had secured the end, Miller called out, —

"Now, jackets off, and get her head out steadily."

The jackets were thrown on shore, and gathered up by the boatman in attendance. The crew poised their oars, No. 2 pushing out her head, and the captain doing the same for the stern. Miller took the starting-rope in his hand.

"How the wind catches her stern," he said; "here, pay out the rope one of you. No, not you — some fellow with a strong hand. Yes, you'll do," he went on, as Hardy stepped down the bank and took hold of the rope; "let me have it foot by foot as I want it. Not too quick; make the most of it — that'll do. Two and three, just dip your oars in to give her way."

The rope paid out steadily, and the boat settled to her place. But now the wind rose again, and the stern drifted in towards the bank.

"You *must* back her a bit, Miller, and keep her a little further out or our oars on stroke side will catch the bank."

"So I see; curse the wind. Back her, one stroke all. Back her, I say!" shouted Miller.

It is no easy matter to get a crew to back her an inch just now, particularly as there are in her two men who have never rowed a race before, except in the torpids, and one who has never rowed a race in his life.

However, back she comes; the starting rope slackens



in Miller's left hand, and the stroke, unshipping his oar, pushes the stern gently out again.

There goes the second gun! one short minute more, and we are off. Short minute, indeed! you wouldn't say so if you were in the boat, with your heart in your mouth and trembling all over like a man with the palsy. Those sixty seconds before the starting gun in your first race — why, they are a little lifetime.

"By Jove, we are drifting in again," said Miller, in horror. The captain looked grim but said nothing; it was too late now for him to be unshipping again. "Here, catch hold of the long boat-hook, and fend her off."

Hardy, to whom this was addressed, seized the boat-hook, and, standing with one foot in the water, pressed the end of the boat-hook against the gunwale, at the full stretch of his arm, and so, by main force, kept the stern out. There was just room for stroke oars to dip, and that was all. The starting rope was as taut as a harp-string; will Miller's left hand hold out?

It is an awful moment. But the coxswain, though almost dragged backwards off his seat, is equal to the occasion. He holds his watch in his right hand with the tiller rope.

"Eight seconds more only. Look out for the flash. Remember, all eyes in the boat."

There it comes, at last — the flash of the starting gun. Long before the sound of the report can roll up the river, the whole pent-up life and energy which has been held in leash, as it were, for the last six minutes, is loose, and breaks away with a bound and a dash which he who has felt it will remember for his life, but the like of which, will he ever feel again? The starting ropes drop from the coxswain's hands, the oars flash into the water, and gleam on the feather, the spray flies from them, and the boats leap forward.

The crowds on the bank scatter, and rush along, each keeping as near as may be to its own boat. Some of the men on the towing-path, some on the very edge of, often in, the water; some slightly in advance, as if they could help to drag their boat forward; some behind, where they can see the pulling better; but all at full speed, in wild excitement, and shouting at the top of their voices to those on whom the honor of the college is laid.

"Well pulled, all!" "Pick her up there, five!" "You're gaining every stroke!" "Time in the bows!" "Bravo, St. Ambrose!"

On they rush by the side of the boats, jostling one another, stumbling, struggling, and panting along.

For a quarter of a mile along the bank the glorious, maddening hurly-burly extends, and rolls up the side of the stream.

For the first ten strokes, Tom was in too great fear of making a mistake to feel or hear or see. His whole soul was glued to the back of the man before him, his one thought to keep time and get his strength into the stroke. But as the crew settled down into the well-known long sweep, what we may call consciousness returned; and, while every muscle in his body was straining, and his chest heaved, and his heart leapt, every nerve seemed to be gathering new life, and his senses to wake into unwonted acuteness. He caught the scent of wild thyme in the air, and found room in his brain to wonder how it could have got there, as he had never seen the plant near the river, or smelt it before. Though his eye never wandered from the back of Diogenes, he seemed to see all things at once. The boat behind, which seemed to be gaining;—it was all he could do to prevent himself from quickening on the stroke as he fancied that;—the eager face of Miller, with his compressed lips, and eyes fixed so

earnestly ahead that Tom could almost feel the glance passing over his right shoulder ; the flying banks and the shouting crowd ; see them with his bodily eyes he could not, but he knew, nevertheless, that Grey had been upset and nearly rolled down the bank into the water in the first hundred yards, that Jack was bounding and scrambling and barking along by the very edge of the stream ; above all, he was just as well aware as if he had been looking at it, of a stalwart form in cap and gown, bounding along, brandishing the long boat-hook, and always keeping just opposite the boat ; and amid all the Babel of voices, and the dash and pulse of the stroke, and the laboring of his own breathing, he heard Hardy's voice coming to him again and again, and clear as if there had been no other sound in the air, "Steady, two ! steady ! well pulled ! steady, steady." The voice seemed to give him strength and keep him to his work. And what work it was ! he had had many a hard pull in the last six weeks, but never aught like this.

But it can't last forever ; men's muscles are not steel, or their lungs bulls' hide, and hearts can't go on pumping a hundred miles an hour long, without bursting. The St. Ambrose boat is well away from the boat behind, there is a great gap between the accompanying crowds ; and now, as they near the Gut, she hangs for a moment or two in hand, though the roar from the bank grows louder and louder, and Tom is already aware that the St. Ambrose crowd is melting into the one ahead of them.

"We must be close to Exeter !" The thought flashes into him, and, it would seem, into the rest of the crew at the same moment ; for, all at once, the strain seems taken off their arms again ; there is no more drag ; she springs to the stroke as she did at the start ; and Miller's face, which had darkened for a few seconds, lightens up again.

Miller's face and attitude are a study. Coiled up into the smallest possible space, his chin almost resting on his knees, his hands close to his sides, firmly but lightly feeling the rudder, as a good horseman handles the mouth of a free-going hunter; if a coxswain could make a bump by his own exertions, surely, he will do it. No sudden jerks of the St. Ambrose rudder will you see, watch as you will from the bank; the boat never hangs through fault of his, but easily and gracefully rounds every point. "You're gaining! you're gaining!" he now and then mutters to the captain, who responds with a wink, keeping his breath for other matters. Isn't he grand, the captain, as he comes forward like lightning, stroke after stroke, his back flat, his teeth set, his whole frame working from the hips with the regularity of a machine? As the space still narrows, the eyes of the fiery little coxswain flash with excitement, but he is far too good a judge to hurry the final effort before the victory is safe in his grasp.

The two crowds are mingled now, and no mistake; and the shouts come all in a heap over the water. "Now, St. Ambrose, six strokes more." "Now, Exeter, you're gaining; pick her up." "Mind the Gut, Exeter." "Bravo, St. Ambrose!" The water rushes by, still eddying from the strokes of the boat ahead. Tom fancies now he can hear their oars and the workings of their rudder, and the voice of their coxswain. In another moment both boats are in the Gut, and a perfect storm of shouts reaches them from the crowd, as it rushes madly off to the left to the foot-bridge, amidst which "Oh, well steered, well steered, St. Ambrose!" is the prevailing cry. Then Miller, motionless as a statue till now, lifts his right hand and whirls the tassel round his head. "Give it her now, boys; six strokes and we're into them." Old Jervis lays down that great broad back, and lashes his oar through the



water with the might of a giant, the crew catch him up in another stroke, the tight new boat answers to the spurt, and Tom feels a little shock behind him, and then a grating sound, as Miller shouts, "Unship oars, bow and three!" and the nose of the St. Ambrose boat glides quietly up the side of the Exeter, till it touches their stroke oar.

"Take care where you're coming to." It is the coxswain of the bumped boat who speaks.

Tom finds himself within a foot or two of him when he looks round; and, being utterly unable to contain his joy, and yet unwilling to exhibit it before the eyes of a gallant rival, turns away towards the shore, and begins telegraphing to Hardy.

"Now, then, what are you at there in the bows? Cast her off, quick. Come, look alive! Push across at once out of the way of the other boats."

"I congratulate you, Jervis," says the Exeter stroke, as the St. Ambrose boat shoots past him. "Do it again next race and I sha'n't care."

"We were within three lengths of Brazen-nose when we bumped," says the all-observant Miller, in a low voice.

"All right," answers the captain; "Brazen-nose isn't so strong as usual. We sha'n't have much trouble there, but a tough job up above, I take it."

"Brazen-nose was better steered than Exeter."

"They muffed it in the Gut, eh?" said the captain. "I thought so by the shouts."

"Yes, we were pressing them a little down below, and their coxswain kept looking over his shoulder. He was in the Gut before he knew it, and had to pull his left hand hard, or they would have fouled the Oxfordshire corner. That stopped their way, and in we went."

"Bravo! and how well we started too."

"Yes, thanks to that Hardy. It was touch and go

though ; I couldn't have held the rope two seconds more."

"How did our fellows work ? She dragged a good deal below the Gut."

Miller looked somewhat serious, but even he cannot be finding fault just now ; for the first step is gained, the first victory won ; and, as Homer sometimes nods, so Miller relaxes the sternness of his rule. The crew, as soon as they have found their voices again, laugh and talk and answer the congratulations of their friends, as the boat slips along close to the towing-path on the Berks side, "easy all," almost keeping pace, nevertheless, with the lower boats, which are racing up under the willows on the Oxfordshire side. Jack, after one or two feints, makes a frantic bound into the water, and is hauled dripping into the boat by Drysdale, unchid by Miller, but to the intense disgust of Diogenes, whose pantaloons and principles are alike outraged by the proceeding. He — the Cato of the oar — scorns to relax the strictness of his code, even after victory won. Neither word nor look does he cast to the exulting St. Ambrosians on the bank ; a twinkle in his eye, and a subdued chuckle or two, alone betray that though an oarsman he is mortal. Already he revolves in his mind the project of an early walk under a few pea-coats, not being quite satisfied (conscientious old boy !) that he tried his stretcher enough in that final spurt, and thinking that there must be an extra pound of flesh on him somewhere or other which did the mischief.

"I say, Brown," said Drysdale, "how do you feel ?"

"All right," said Tom ; "I never felt jollier in my life."

"By Jove, though, it was an awful grind ; didn't you wish yourself well out of it below the Gut ?"

"No, nor you either."

"Didn't I though! I was awfully baked, my throat is like a lime-kiln yet. What did you think about?"

"Well, about keeping time, I think," said Tom, laughing, "but I can't remember much."

"I only kept on by thinking how I hated those devils in the Exeter boat, and how done up they must be, and hoping their Number 2 felt like having a fit."

At this moment they came opposite the Cherwell. The leading boat was just passing the winding-post, off the University barge, and the band struck up the "Conquering Hero," with a crash. And while a mighty sound of shouts, murmurs, and music went up into the evening sky, Miller shook the tiller-ropes again, the captain shouted, "Now then, pick her up," and the St. Ambrose boat shot up between the swarming banks at racing pace to her landing-place, the lion of the evening.

Dear readers of the gentler sex! you, I know, will pardon the enthusiasm which stirs our pulses, now in sober middle age, as we call up again the memories of this the most exciting sport of our boyhood (for we were but boys, then, after all). You will pardon, though I fear hopelessly unable to understand the above sketch; your sons and brothers will tell you it could not have been made less technical.

For you, male readers, who have never handled an oar, — what shall I say to you? You, at least, I hope, in some way — in other contests of one kind or another — have felt as we felt, and have striven as we strove. You *ought* to understand and sympathize with us in all our boating memories. Oh, how fresh and sweet they are! Above all that one of the gay little Henley town, the carriage-crowded bridge, the noble river reach, the giant poplars, which mark the critical point of the course — the roaring

column of "undergrades," light blue and dark purple, Cantab and Oxonian, alike and yet how different, —hurling along together, and hiding the towing-path — the clang of Henley church-bells — the cheering, the waving of embroidered handkerchiefs, and glancing of bright eyes, the ill-concealed pride of fathers, the open delight and exultation of mothers and sisters — the levée in the town-hall when the race was rowed, the great cup full of champagne (inn-champagne, but we were not critical) — the chops, the steaks, the bitter beer — but we run into anti-climax — remember, we were boys then, and bear with us if you cannot sympathize.

And you, old companions, *Θραύραι*, benchers (of the gallant eight-oar), now seldom met, but never-forgotten, lairds, squires, soldiers, merchants, lawyers, grave J.P.'s, graver clergymen, gravest bishops (for of two bishops at least does our brotherhood boast), I turn for a moment from my task, to reach to you the right hand of fellowship from these pages, and empty this solemn pewter — trophy of hard-won victory — to your health and happiness.

Surely, none the worse Christians and citizens are ye for your involuntary failing of muscularity!



## CHAPTER XIV.

### A CHANGE IN THE CREW, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

It was on a Saturday that the St. Ambrose boat made the first bump, described in our last chapter. On the next Saturday, the day-week after the first success, at nine o'clock in the evening, our hero was at the door of Hardy's rooms. He just stopped for one moment outside, with his hand on the lock, looking a little puzzled, but withal pleased, and then opened the door and entered. The little estrangement which there had been between them for some weeks, had passed away since the races had begun. Hardy had thrown himself into the spirit of them so thoroughly, that he had not only regained all his hold on Tom, but had warmed up the whole crew in his favor, and had mollified the martinet Miller himself. It was he who had managed the starting rope in every race, and his voice from the towing path had come to be looked upon as a safe guide for clapping on or rowing steady. Even Miller, autocrat as he was, had come to listen for it, in confirmation of his own judgment, before calling on the crew for the final effort.

So Tom had recovered his old footing in the servitor's rooms; and, when he entered on the night in question, did so with the bearing of an intimate friend. Hardy's tea commons were on one end of the table as usual, and he was sitting at the other poring over a book. Tom marched straight up to him, and leant over his shoulder.

"What, here you are at the perpetual grind," he said.

"Come, shut up, and give me some tea; I want to talk to you."

Hardy looked up with a grim smile.

"Are you up to a cup of tea?" he said; "look here, I was just reminded of you fellows. Shall I construe for you?"

He pointed with his finger to the open page of the book he was reading. It was the *Knights of Aristophanes*, and Tom, leaning over his shoulder, read, —

*"κᾶτα καθίζον μαλακῶς ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι," etc.'*

After meditating a moment, he burst out, "You hard-hearted old ruffian! I come here for sympathy, and the first thing you do is to poke fun at me out of your wretched classics! I've a good mind to clear out, and not do my errand."

"What's a man to do?" said Hardy. "I hold that it's always better to laugh at fortune. What's the use of repining? You have done famously, and second is a capital place on the river."

"Second be hanged!" said Tom. "We mean to be first."

"Well, I hope we may?" said Hardy. "I can tell you nobody felt it more than I — not even old Diogenes — when you didn't make your bump to-night."

"Now you talk like a man, and a Saint Ambrosian," said Tom. "But what do you think? Shall we ever catch them?" and, so saying, he retired to a chair opposite the tea-things.

"No," said Hardy; "I don't think we ever shall. I'm very sorry to say it, but they are an uncommonly strong lot, and we have a weak place or two in our crew. I don't think we can do more than we did to-night — at least with the present crew."

"But if we could get a little more strength we might?"

"Yes, I think so. Jervis' stroke is worth two of theirs. A very little more powder would do it."

"Then we must have a little more powder."

"Ay, but how are we to get it? Who can you put in?"

"You!" said Tom, sitting up. "There, now, that's just what I am come about. Drysdale is to go out. Will you pull next race? They all want you to row."

"Do they?" said Hardy, quietly (but Tom could see that his eyes sparkled at the notion, though he was too proud to show how much he was pleased); "then they had better come and ask me themselves."

"Well, you cantankerous old party, they're coming, I can tell you!" said Tom, in great delight. "The captain just sent me on to break ground, and will be here directly himself. I say now, Hardy," he went on, "don't you say no. I've set my heart upon it. I'm sure we shall bump them if you pull."

"I don't know that," said Hardy, getting up, and beginning to make tea, to conceal the excitement he was in at the idea of rowing; "you see I'm not in training."

"Gammon," said Tom, "you're always in training, and you know it."

"Well," said Hardy, "I can't be in worse than Drysdale. He has been of no use above the Gut this last three nights."

"That's just what Miller says," said Tom, "and here comes the captain." There was a knock at the door while he spoke, and Jervis and Miller entered.

Tom was in a dreadful fidget for the next twenty minutes, and may best be compared to an enthusiastic envoy negotiating a commercial treaty, and suddenly finding his

action impeded by the arrival of his principals. Miller was very civil, but not pressing ; he seemed to have come more with a view of talking over the present state of things, and consulting upon them, than of enlisting a recruit. Hardy met him more than half-way, and speculated on all sorts of possible issues, without a hint of volunteering himself. But presently Jervis, who did not understand finessing, broke in, and asked Hardy, point-blank, to pull in the next race ; and when he pleaded want of training, overruled him at once, by saying that there was no better training than sculling. So in half an hour all was settled. Hardy was to pull five in the next race, Diogenes was to take Blake's place at No. 7, and Blake to take Drysdale's oar at No. 2. The whole crew were to go for a long training walk the next day, Sunday, in the afternoon ; to go down to Abingdon on Monday, just to get into swing in their new places, and then on Tuesday to abide the fate of war. They had half an hour's pleasant talk over Hardy's tea, and then separated.

"I always told you he was our man," said the captain to Miller, as they walked together to the gates ; "we want strength, and he is as strong as a horse. You must have seen him sculling yourself. There isn't his match on the river to my mind."

"Yes, I think he'll do," replied Miller ; "at any rate, he can't be worse than Drysdale."

As for Tom and Hardy, it may safely be said that no two men in Oxford went to bed in better spirits that Saturday night than they two.

And now to explain how it came about that Hardy was wanted. Fortune had smiled upon the St. Ambrosians in the two races which succeeded the one in which they had bumped Exeter. They had risen two more places without any very great trouble. Of course, the constituencies



on the bank, magnified their powers and doings. There never was such a crew, they were quite safe to be head of the river, nothing could live against their pace. So the young oars in the boat swallowed all they heard, thought themselves the finest fellows going, took less and less pains to keep up their condition, and when they got out of ear-shot of Jervis and Diogenes, were ready to bet two to one that they would bump Oriel the next night, and keep easily head of the river for the rest of the races.

Saturday night came, and brought with it a most useful though unpalatable lesson to the St. Ambrosians. The Oriel boat was manned chiefly by old oars, seasoned in many a race, and not liable to panic when hard pressed. They had a fair though not a first-rate stroke, and a good coxswain; experts remarked that they were rather too heavy for their boat, and that she dipped a little when they put on any thing like a severe spurt; but on the whole they were by no means the sort of crew you could just run into hand over hand. So Miller and Diogenes preached, and so the Ambrosians found out to their cost.

They had the pace of the other boat, and gained as usual a boat's length before the Gut; but, first those two fatal corners were passed, and then other well-remembered spots where former bumps had been made, and still Miller made no sign; on the contrary, he looked gloomy and savage. The St. Ambrosian shouts from the shore, too, changed from the usual exultant peals into something like a quaver of consternation, while the air was rent with the name and laudations of "little Oriel."

Long before the Cherwell Drysdale was completely baked (he had played truant the day before and dined at the Weirs, where he had imbibed much dubious hock), but he from old habit managed to keep time. Tom and the other young oars got flurried, and quickened; the

boat dragged, there was no life left in her, and, though they managed just to hold their first advantage, could not put her a foot nearer the stern of the Oriel boat, which glided past the winning-post a clear boat's length ahead of her pursuers, and with a crew much less distressed.

Such races must tell on strokes ; and even Jarvis, who had pulled magnificently throughout, was very much done at the close, and leant over his oar with a swimming in his head, and an approach to faintness, and was scarcely able to see for a minute or so. Miller's indignation knew no bounds, but he bottled it up till he had manœuvred the crew into their dressing-room by themselves, Jarvis having stopped below. Then he let out, and did not spare them. "They would kill their captain, whose little finger was worth the whole of them ; they were disgracing the college ; three or four of them had neither heart, head, nor pluck." They all felt that this was unjust, for after all had they not brought the boat up to the second place ? Poor Diogenes sat in a corner and groaned ; he forgot to prefix "old fellow" to the few observations he made. Blake had great difficulty in adjusting his necktie before the glass ; he merely remarked in a pause of the objugation, "In faith, coxswain, these be very bitter words." Tom and most of the others were too much out of heart to resist ; but at last Drysdale fired up —

"You've no right to be so savage that I can see," he said, stopping the low whistle suddenly in which he was indulging, as he sat on the corner of the table ; "you seem to think No. 2 the weakest out of several weak places in the boat."

"Yes, I do," said Miller.

"Then this honorable member," said Drysdale, getting off the table, "seeing that his humble efforts are unap-

preciated, thinks it best for the public service to place his resignation in the hands of your coxswainship."

"Which my coxswainship is graciously pleased to accept," replied Miller.

"Hurrah for a roomy punt and a soft cushion next racing night — it's almost worth while to have been rowing all this time, to realize the sensations I shall feel when I see you fellows passing the Cherwell on Tuesday."

"*Suave est*, it's what I'm partial to, *mari magno*, in the last reach, *a terrâ*, from the towing-path, *alterius magnum spectare laborem*, to witness the tortures of you wretched beggars in the boat. I'm obliged to translate for Drysdale, who never learned Latin," said Blake, finishing his tie, and turning to the company. There was an awkward silence. Miller was chafing inwardly and running over in his mind what was to be done; and nobody else seemed quite to know what ought to happen next, when the door opened and Jervis came in.

"Congratulate me, my captain," said Drysdale; "I'm well out of it at last."

Jervis "pished and pshaw'd" a little at hearing what had happened, but his presence acted like oil on the waters. The moment that the resignation was named, Tom's thoughts had turned to Hardy. Now was the time — he had such confidence in the man, that the idea of getting him in for next race entirely changed the aspect of affairs to him, and made him feel as "bumptious" again as he had done in the morning. So with this idea in his head, he hung about till the captain had made his toilet, and joined himself to him and Miller as they walked up.

"Well, what are we to do now?" said the captain.

"That's just what you have to settle," said Miller;

"you have been up all the term, and know the men's pulling better than I."

"I suppose we must press somebody from the torpid — let me see, there's Burton."

"He rolls like a porpoise," interrupted Miller positively; "impossible."

"Stewart might do then."

"Never kept time for three strokes in his life," said Miller.

"Well, there are no better men," said the Captain.

"Then we may lay our account to stopping where we are, if we don't even lose a place," said Miller.

"Dust unto dust, what must be, must;

If you can't get crumb, you'd best eat crust,"

said the captain.

"It's all very well talking coolly now," said Miller, "but you'll kill yourself trying to bump, and there are three more nights."

"Hardy would row if you asked him, I'm sure," said Tom.

The captain looked at Miller, who shook his head. "I don't think it," he said; "I take him to be a shy bird that wont come to everybody's whistle. We might have had him two years ago, I believe — I wish we had."

"I always told you so," said Jervis; "at any rate, let's try him. He can but say no, and I don't think he will, for you see he has been at the starting-place every night, and as keen as a freshman all the time."

"I'm sure he wont," said Tom; "I know he would give any thing to pull."

"You had better go to his rooms and sound him," said the captain; "Miller and I will follow in half an hour." We have already heard how Tom's mission prospered.

The next day, at a few minutes before two o'clock, the



St. Ambrose crew, including Hardy, with Miller (who was a desperate and indefatigable pedestrian) for leader, crossed Magdalen Bridge. At five they returned to college, having done a little over fifteen miles, fair heel and toe walking, in the interval. The afternoon had been very hot, and Miller chuckled to the captain, "I don't think there will be much trash left in any of them after that. That fellow Hardy is as fine as a race-horse, and, did you see, he never turned a hair all the way."

The crew dispersed to their rooms, delighted with the performance now that it was over, and feeling that they were much the better for it, though they all declared it had been harder work than any race they had yet pulled. It would have done a trainer's heart good to have seen them, some twenty minutes afterwards, dropping into Hall (where they were allowed to dine on Sundays, on the joint), fresh from cold baths, and looking ruddy and clear, and hard enough for any thing.

Again on Monday, not a chance was lost. The St. Ambrose boat started soon after one o'clock for Abingdon. They swung steadily down the whole way, and back again to Sandford without a single spurt; Miller generally standing in the stern, and preaching above all things steadiness and time. From Sandford up, they were accompanied by half a dozen men or so, who ran up the bank watching them. The struggle for the first place on the river was creating great excitement in the rowing world, and these were some of the most keen connoisseurs, who, having heard that St. Ambrose had changed a man, were on the look-out to satisfy themselves as to how it would work. The general opinion was veering round in favor of Oriel; changes so late in the races, and at such a critical moment, were looked upon as very damaging.

Foremost amongst the runners on the bank was a wiry dark man, with sanguine complexion, who went with a peculiar long, low stride, keeping his keen eye well on the boat. Just above Kennington Island, Jervis, noticing this particular spectator for the first time, called on the crew, and, quickening his stroke, took them up the reach at racing pace. As they lay in Iffley lock the dark man appeared above them, and exchanged a few words, and a good deal of dumb show, with the captain and Miller, and then disappeared.

From Iffley up they went steadily again. On the whole, Miller seemed to be in very good spirits in the dressing-room; he thought the boat trimmed better, and went better than she had ever done before, and complimented Blake particularly for the ease with which he had changed sides. They all went up in high spirits, calling on their way at "The Choughs" for one glass of old ale round, which Miller was graciously pleased to allow. Tom never remembered till after they were out again, that Hardy had never been there before, and felt embarrassed for a moment, but it soon passed off. A moderate dinner and early to bed finished the day, and Miller was justified in his parting remark to the captain, "Well, if we don't win, we can comfort ourselves that we hav'n't dropped a stitch this last two days, at any rate."

Then the eventful day arose which Tom and many another man felt was to make or mar St. Ambrose. It was a glorious early summer day, without a cloud, scarcely a breath of air stirring. "We shall have a fair start, at any rate," was the general feeling. We have already seen what a throat-drying, nervous business, the morning and afternoon of a race-day is, and must not go over the same ground more than we can help; so we will imagine

the St. Ambrose boat down at the starting-place, lying close to the towing-path, just before the first gun.

There is a much greater crowd than usual opposite the two first boats. By this time most of the other boats have found their places, for there is not much chance of any thing very exciting down below ; so, besides the men of Oriel and St. Ambrose (who muster to-night of all sorts, the fastest of the fast and slowest of the slow having been by this time shamed into something like enthusiasm), many of other colleges, whose boats have no chance of bumping or being bumped, flock to the point of attraction.

"Do you make out what the change is?" says a backer of Oriel to his friend in the like predicament.

"Yes ; they've got a new No. 5 ; don't you see ? and, by George, I don't like his looks," answered his friend ; "awfully long and strong in the arm, and well ribbed up. A devilish awkward customer. I shall go and try to get a hedge."

"Pooh," says the other, "did you ever know one man win a race?"

"Ay, that I have," says his friend, and walks off towards the Oriel crowd to take five to four on Oriel in half sovereigns, if he can get it.

Now their dark friend of yesterday comes up at a trot, and pulls up close to the captain, with whom he is evidently dear friends. He is worth looking at, being coxswain of the O. U. B., the best steerer, runner, and swimmer, in Oxford ; amphibious himself, and sprung from an amphibious race. His own boat is in no danger, so he has left her to take care of herself. He is on the look-out for recruits for the University crew, and no recruiting sergeant has a sharper eye for the sort of stuff he requires.

"What's his name?" he says in a low tone to Jervis,

giving a jerk with his head towards Hardy. "Where did you get him?"

"Hardy," answers the captain in the same tone; "it's his first night in the boat."

"I know that," replies the coxswain; "I never saw him row before yesterday. He's the fellow who sculls in that brown skiff; isn't he?"

"Yes, and I think he'll do; keep your eye on him."

The coxswain nods as if he were pretty much of the same mind, and examines Hardy with the eye of a connoisseur, pretty much as the judge at an agricultural show looks at the prize bull. Hardy is tightening the strap of his stretcher, and all-unconscious of the compliments which are being paid him. The great authority seems satisfied with his inspection, grins, rubs his hands, and trots off to the Oriel boat to make comparisons.

Just as the first gun is heard, Gray sidles nervously to the front of the crowd as if he were doing something very audacious, and draws Hardy's attention, exchanging sympathizing nods with him, but saying nothing, for he knows not what to say, and then disappearing again in the crowd.

"Hallo, Drysdale, is that you?" says Blake, as they push off from the shore. "I thought you were going to take it easy in a punt."

"So I thought," said Drysdale; "but I couldn't keep away, and here I am. I shall run up; and mind, if I see you within ten feet, and cocksure to win, I'll give a view holloa. I'll be bound you shall hear it."

"May it come speedily," said Blake, and then settled himself in his seat.

"Eyes in the boat—mind now, steady all, watch the stroke and don't quicken."

These are Miller's last words; every faculty of himself



and the crew being now devoted to getting a good start. This is no difficult matter, as the water is like glass, and the boat lies lightly on it, obeying the slightest dip of the oars of bow and two, who just feel the water twice or thrice in the last minute. Then, after a few moments of breathless hush on the bank, the last gun is fired and they are off.

The same scene of mad excitement ensues, only ten-fold more intense, as almost the whole interest of the races is to-night concentrated on the two head boats and their fate. At every gate there is a jam, and the weaker vessels are shoved into the ditches, upset, and left unnoticed. The most active men, including the O. U. B. coxswain, shun the gates altogether, and take the big ditches in their stride, making for the long bridges, that they may get quietly over these and be safe for the best part of the race. They know that the critical point of the struggle will be near the finish.

Both boats make a beautiful start, and again as before in the first dash the St. Ambrose pace tells, and they gain their boat's length before first winds fail; then they settle down for a long, steady effort. Both crews are rowing comparatively steady, reserving themselves for the tug of war up above. Thus they pass the Gut, and so those two treacherous corners, the scene of countless bumps, into the wider water beyond, up under the willows.

Miller's face is decidedly hopeful; he shows no sign, indeed, but you can see that he is not the same man as he was at this place in the last race. He feels that to-day the boat is full of life, and that he can call on his crew with hopes of an answer. His well-trained eye also detects that, while both crews are at full stretch, his own, instead of losing, as it did on the last night, is now gaining inch by inch on Oriel. The gain is scarcely percepti-

ble to him even; from the bank it is quite imperceptible; but there it is; he is surer and surer of it, as one after another the willows are left behind.

And now comes the pinch. The Oriel captain is beginning to be conscious of the fact which has been dawning on Miller, but will not acknowledge it to himself, and as his coxswain turns the boat's head gently across the stream, and makes for the Berkshire side and the goal, now full in view, he smiles grimly as he quickens his stroke; he will shake off these light-heeled gentry yet, as he did before.

Miller sees the move in a moment, and signals his captain, and the next stroke St. Ambrose has quickened also; and now there is no mistake about it, St. Ambrose is creeping up slowly but surely. The boat's length lessens to forty feet, thirty feet; surely and steadily lessens. But the race is not lost yet; thirty feet is a short space enough to look at on the water, but a good bit to pick up foot by foot in the last two hundred yards of a desperate struggle. They are over under the Berkshire side now, and there stands up the winning-post, close ahead, all but won. The distance lessens and lessens still, but the Oriel crew stick steadily and gallantly to their work, and will fight every inch of distance to the last. The Orielites on the bank, who are rushing along, sometimes in the water, sometimes out, hoarse, furious, madly alternating between hope and despair, have no reason to be ashamed of a man in the crew. Off the mouth of the Cherwell there is still twenty feet between them. Another minute, and it will be over one way or another. Every man in both crews is now doing his best, and no mistake: tell me which boat holds the most men who can do better than their best at a pinch, who will risk a broken bloodvessel, and I will tell you how it will end. "Hard pounding, gentlemen,

let's see who will pound longest," the duke is reported to have said at Waterloo, and won. "Now, Tummy, lad, 'tis thou or I," Big Ben said as he came up to the last round of his hardest fight, and won. Is there a man of that temper in either crew to-night? If so, now's his time. For both coxswains have called on their men for the last effort; Miller is whirling the tassel of his right-hand tiller rope round his head, like a wiry little lunatic; from the towing-path, from Christchurch Meadow, from the rows of punts, from the clustered tops of the barges, comes a roar of encouragement and applause, and the band, unable to resist the impulse, breaks with a crash into the "Jolly Young Waterman," playing two bars to the second. A bump in the Gut is nothing—a few partisans on the towing-path to cheer you, already out of breath; but up here at the very finish, with all Oxford looking on, when the prize is the headship of the river; once in a generation only do men get such a chance.

Who ever saw Jervis not up to his work? The St. Ambrose stroke is glorious. Tom had an atom of go still left in the very back of his head, and at this moment he heard Drysdale's view holloa above all the din; it seemed to give him a lift, and other men besides in the boat, for in another six strokes the gap is lessened and St. Ambrose has crept up to ten feet, and now to five from the stern of Oriel. Weeks afterwards Hardy confided to Tom that when he heard that view halloa he seemed to feel the muscles of his arms and legs turn into steel, and did more work in the last twenty strokes than in any other forty in the earlier part of the race.

Another fifty yards and Oriel is safe, but the look on the captain's face is so ominous that their coxswain glances over his shoulder. The bow of St. Ambrose is within two feet of their rudder. It is a moment for des-

perate expedients. He pulls his left tiller rope suddenly, thereby carrying the stern of his own boat out of the line of the St. Ambrose, and calls on his crew once more; they respond gallantly yet, but the rudder is against them for a moment, and the boat drags. St. Ambrose overlaps. "A bump, a bump," shout the St. Ambrosians on shore. "Row on, row on," screams Miller. He has not yet felt the electric shock, and knows he will miss his bump if the young ones slacken for a moment. A young coxswain would have gone on making shots at the stern of the Oriel boat, and so have lost.

A bump now and no mistake; the bow of the St. Ambrose boat jams the oar of the Oriel stroke, and the two boats pass the winning-post with the way that was on them when the bump was made. So near a shave was it.

To describe the scene on the bank is beyond me. It was a hurly-burly of delirious joy, in the midst of which took place a terrific combat between Jack and the Oriel dog—a noble black bull terrier belonging to the college in general, and no one in particular—who always attended the races and felt the misfortune keenly. Luckily, they were parted without worse things happening; for though the Oriel men were savage, and not disinclined for a jostle, the milk of human kindness was too strong for the moment in their adversaries, and they extricated themselves from the crowd, carrying off Crib their dog, and looking straight before them into vacancy.

"Well rowed, boys," says Jervis, turning round to his crew as they lay panting on their oars.

"Well rowed, five," says Miller, who even in the hour of such a triumph is not inclined to be general in laudation.

"Well rowed, five," is echoed from the bank; it is that cunning man, the recruiting-sergeant. "*Fatally* well



rowed," he adds to a comrade, with whom he gets into one of the punts to cross to Christchurch Meadow; "we must have him in the University crew."

"I don't think you'll get him to row, from what I hear," answers the other.

"Then he must be handcuffed and carried into the boat by force," says the coxswain O. U. B.; "why is not the pressgang an institution in this university?"

## CHAPTER XV.

### A STORM BREWS AND BREAKS.

CERTAINLY Drysdale's character came out well that night. He did not seem the least jealous of the success which had been achieved through his dismissal. On the contrary, there was no man in the college who showed more interest in the race, or joy at the result, than he. Perhaps the pleasure of being out of it himself may have reckoned for something with him. In any case, there he was at the door with Jack, to meet the crew as they landed after the race, with a large pewter foaming with shandygaff, in each hand, for their recreation. Draco himself could not have forbidden them to drink at that moment; so, amidst shaking of hands and clappings on the back, the pewters travelled round from stroke to bow, and then the crew went off to their dressing-room, accompanied by Drysdale and others.

"Bravo! it was the finest race that has been seen on the river this six years; everybody says so. You fellows have deserved well of your country. I've sent up to college to have supper in my rooms, and you must all come. Hang training! there are only two more nights, and you're safe to keep your place. What do you say, captain? eh, Miller? Now be good-natured for once."

"Miller, what do you say?" said the captain.

"Well, we don't get head of the river every night," said Miller. "I don't object if you'll all turn out and go to bed at eleven."

"That's all right," said Drysdale; "and now let's go to the old 'Choughs' and have a glass of ale while supper is getting ready. Eh, Brown?" and he hooked his arm into Tom's and led the way into the town.

"I'm so sorry you were not in it for the finish," said Tom, who was quite touched by his friend's good-humor.

"Are you?" said Drysdale; "it's more than I am then, I can tell you. If you could have seen yourself under the willows, you wouldn't have thought yourself much of an object of envy. Jack and I were quite satisfied with our share of work and glory on the bank. Weren't we, old fellow?" at which salutation Jack reared himself on his hind legs and licked his master's hand.

"Well, you're a real good fellow for taking it as you do. I don't think I could have come near the river if I had been you."

"I take every thing as it comes," said Drysdale. "The next race is on Derby day, and I couldn't have gone if I hadn't been turned out of the boat; that's a compensation, you see. Here we are; I wonder if Miss Patty has heard of the victory?"

They turned down the little passage-entrance of the "Choughs" as he spoke, followed by most of the crew, and by a tail of younger St. Ambrosians, their admirers, and the bar was crowded the next moment. Patty was there, of course, and her services were in great requisition; for though each of the crew only took a small glass of the old ale, they made as much fuss about it with the pretty barmaid as if they were drinking hogsheads. In fact, it had become clearly the correct thing with the St. Ambrosians to make much of Patty; and, considering the circumstances, it was only a wonder that she was not more spoilt than seemed to be the case. Indeed, as Hardy stood up in the corner opposite to the landlady's chair, a

silent on-looker at the scene, he couldn't help admitting to himself that the girl held her own well, without doing or saying any thing unbecoming a modest woman. And it was a hard thing for him to be fair to her, for what he saw now in a few minutes confirmed the impression which his former visit had left on his mind — that his friend was safe in her toils; how deeply, of course, he could not judge, but that there was more between them than he could approve was now clear enough to him, and he stood silent, leaning against the wall in that furthest corner, in the shadow of a projecting cupboard, much distressed in mind, and pondering over what it behoved him to do under the circumstances. With the exception of a civil sentence or two to the old landlady, who sat opposite him knitting, and casting rather uneasy looks from time to time towards the front of the bar, he spoke to no one. In fact, nobody came near that end of the room, and their existence seemed to have been forgotten by the rest.

Tom had been a little uncomfortable for the first minute; but after seeing Hardy take his glass of ale, and then missing him, he forgot all about him, and was too busy with his own affairs to trouble himself further. He had become a sort of drawer or barman at the "Choughs," and presided, under Patty, over the distribution of the ale, giving an eye to his chief to see that she was not put upon.

Drysdale and Jack left after a short stay, to see that the supper was being properly prepared. Soon afterwards Patty went off out of the bar in answer to some bell which called her to another part of the house; and the St. Ambrosians voted that it was time to go off to college to supper, and cleared out into the street.

Tom went out with the last batch of them, but lingered a moment in the passage outside. He knew the house



and its ways well enough by this time. The next moment Patty appeared from a side door, which led to another part of the house.

"So you're not going to stay to play a game with aunt," she said; "what makes you in such a hurry?"

"I must go up to college; there's a supper to celebrate our getting head of the river." Patty looked down and pouted a little. Tom took her hand, and said, sentimentally, "Don't be cross now; you know that I would sooner stay here; don't you?"

She tossed her head, and pulled away her hand, and then changing the subject, said, —

"Who's that ugly old fellow who was here again to-night?"

"There was no one older than Miller, and he is rather an admirer of yours. I shall tell him you called him ugly."

"Oh, I don't mean Mr. Miller; you know that well enough," she answered. "I mean him in the old rough coat, who don't talk to any one."

"Ugly old fellow, Patty? Why, you mean Hardy. He's a great friend of mine, and you must like him for my sake."

"I'm sure I wont. I don't like him a bit; he looks so cross at me."

"It's all your fancy. There now, good-night."

"You sha'n't go, however, till you've given me that handkerchief. You promised it me if you got head of the river."

"O you little story-teller. Why, they are my college colors. I wouldn't part with them for worlds. I'll give you a lock of my hair, and the prettiest handkerchief you can find in Oxford; but not this."

"But I *will* have it, and you *did* promise me it," she

said, and put up her hands suddenly, and untied the bow of Tom's neck-handkerchief. He caught her wrists in his hands, and looked down into her eyes, in which, if he saw a little pique at his going, he saw other things which stirred in him strange feelings of triumph and tenderness.

"Well, then, you shall pay for it, anyhow," he said, — Why need I tell what followed? — There was a little struggle; a "Go along, do, Mr. Brown;" and the next minute Tom, minus his handkerchief, was hurrying after his companions; and Patty was watching him from the door, and setting her cap to rights. Then she turned and went back into the bar, and started, and turned red, as she saw Hardy there, still standing in the further corner, opposite her aunt. He finished his glass of ale as she came in, and then passed out, wishing them "Good-night."

"Why, aunt," she said, "I thought they were all gone. Who was that sour-looking man?"

"He seems a nice quiet gentleman, my dear," said the old lady looking up. "I'm sure he's much better than those ones as makes so much racket in the bar. But where have you been, Patty?"

"Oh, to the commercial room, aunt. Wont you have a game at cribbage?" and Patty took up the cards and set the board out, the old lady looking at her doubtfully all the time through her spectacles. She was beginning to wish that the college gentlemen wouldn't come so much to the house, though they were very good customers.

Tom, minus his handkerchief, hurried after his comrades, and caught them up before they got to college. They were all there but Hardy, whose absence vexed our hero for a moment; he had hoped that Hardy, now that he was in the boat, would have shaken off all his reserve towards the other men, and blamed him because he had not done so at once. There could be no reason for it but

his own oddness, he thought, for every one was full of his praises as they strolled on talking of the race. Miller praised his style and time and pluck. "Didn't you feel how the boat sprung when I called on you at the Cherwell?" he said to the captain. "Drysdale was always dead beat at the Gut, and just a log in the boat; pretty much like some of the rest of you."

"He's in such good training, too," said Diogenes; "I shall find out how he diets himself."

"We've pretty well done with that, I should hope," said Number 6. "There are only two more nights, and nothing can touch us now."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Miller. "Mind now, all of you, don't let us have any nonsense till the races are over and we are all safe."

And so they talked on till they reached college, and then dispersed to their rooms to wash and dress, and met again in Drysdale's rooms, where supper was awaiting them.

Again Hardy did not appear. Drysdale sent a scout to his rooms, who brought back word that he could not find him; so Drysdale set to work to do the honors of his table, and enjoyed the pleasure of tempting the crew with all sorts of forbidden hot liquors, which he and the rest of the non-professionals imbibed freely. But with Miller's eye on them, and the example of Diogenes and the captain before them, the rest of the crew exercised an abstemiousness which would have been admirable, had it not been in a great measure compulsory.

It was a great success, this supper at Drysdale's, although knocked up at an hour's notice. The triumph of their boat had, for the time, the effect of warming up and drawing out the feeling of fellowship, which is the soul of college life. Though only a few men besides the

crew sat down to supper, long before it was cleared away men of every set in the college came in, in the highest spirits, and soon the room was crowded. For Drysdale sent round to every man in the college with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, and they flocked in and sat where they could, and men talked and laughed with neighbors, with whom, perhaps, they had never exchanged a word since the time when they were freshmen together.

Of course, there were speeches cheered to the echo, and songs, of which the choruses might have been heard in the High Street. At a little before eleven, nevertheless, despite the protestations of Drysdale, and the passive resistance of several of their number, Miller carried off the crew, and many of the other guests went at the same time, leaving their host and a small circle to make a night of it.

Tom went to his rooms in high spirits, humming the air of one of the songs he had just heard; but he had scarcely thrown his gown on a chair when a thought struck him, and he ran down-stairs again and across to Hardy's rooms.

Hardy was sitting with some cold tea poured out, but untasted, before him, and no books open — a very unusual thing with him at night. But Tom either did not or would not notice that there was any thing unusual.

He seated himself and began gossiping away as fast as he could, without looking much at the other. He began by recounting all the complimentary things which had been said by Miller and others of Hardy's pulling. Then he went on to the supper party; what a jolly evening they had had; he did not remember any thing so pleasant since he had been up, and he retailed the speeches and named the best songs. "You really ought to have been there; why didn't you come?" Drysdale sent over for



you. I'm sure every one wished you had been there. Didn't you get his message?"

"I didn't feel up to going," said Hardy.

"There's nothing the matter, eh?" said Tom, as the thought crossed his mind that perhaps Hardy had hurt himself in the race, as he had not been regularly training.

"No, nothing," answered the other.

Tom tried to make play again, but soon came to an end of his talk. It was impossible to make head against that cold silence. At last he stopped, looked at Hardy for a minute, who was staring abstractedly at the sword over his mantle-piece, and then said, —

"There *is* something the matter, though. Don't sit glowering as if you had swallowed a furze bush. Why, you haven't been smoking, old boy?" he added, getting up and putting his hand on the other's shoulder. "I see that's it. Here, take one of my weeds, they're mild. Miller allows two of these a day."

"No, thank'ee," said Hardy, rousing himself; "Miller hasn't interfered with my smoking, and I *will* have a pipe, for I think I want it."

"Well, I don't see that it does you any good," said Tom, after watching him fill, and light, and smoke for some minutes without saying a word. "Here, I've managed the one thing I had at heart. You are in the crew, and we are head of the river, and everybody is praising your rowing up to the skies, and saying that the bump was all your doing. And here I come to tell you, and not a word can I get out of you. Aint you pleased? Do you think we shall keep our place?" He paused a moment.

"Hang it all, I say," he added, losing all patience; "swear a little if you can't do any thing else. Let's hear

your voice ; it isn't such a tender one that you need keep it all shut up."

"Well," said Hardy, making a great effort ; "the real fact is I *have* something, and something very serious, to say to you."

"Then I'm not going to listen to it," broke in Tom ; "I'm not serious, and I won't be serious, and no one shall make me serious to-night. It's no use, so don't look glum. But isn't the ale at 'The Choughs' good ? and isn't it a dear little place ?"

"It's that place I want to talk to you about," said Hardy, turning to him at last with a deep fetching of his breath. "Now, Brown, we haven't known one another long, but I think I understand you, and I know I like you, and I hope you like me."

"Well, well, well," broke in Tom, "of course I like you, old fellow, or else I shouldn't come poking after you, and wasting so much of your time, and sitting on your cursed hard chairs in the middle of the races. What has liking to do with 'The Choughs,' or 'The Choughs' with long faces ? You ought to have had another glass of ale there."

"I wish you had never had a glass of ale there," said Hardy, bolting out his words as if they were red-hot. "Brown, you have no right to go to that place."

"Why ?" said Tom, sitting up in his chair, and beginning to be nettled.

"You know why," said Hardy, looking him full in the face, and puffing out huge volumes of smoke. In spite of the bluntness of the attack, there was a yearning look which spread over the rugged brow, and shone out of the deep-set eyes of the speaker, which almost conquered Tom. . But first pride, and then the consciousness of what

was coming next, which began to dawn on him, rose in his heart. It was all he could do to meet that look full, but he managed it, though he flushed to the roots of his hair, as he simply repeated through his set teeth, "Why?"

"I say again," said Hardy, "you know why."

"I see what you mean," said Tom, slowly; "as you say, we have not known one another long; long enough though, I should have thought, for you to have been more charitable. Why am I not to go to 'The Choughs,' because there happens to be a pretty barmaid there? All our crew go, and twenty other men besides."

"Yes; but do any of them go in the sort of way you do? Does she look at any one of them as she does at you?"

"How do I know?"

"That's not fair, or true, or like you, Brown," said Hardy, getting up, and beginning to walk up and down the room. "You *do* know that that girl doesn't care a straw for the other men who go there. You *do* know that she is beginning to care for you."

"You seem to know a great deal about it," said Tom; "I don't believe you were ever there before two days ago."

"No, I never was."

"Then I think you needn't be quite so quick at finding fault. If there were any thing I didn't wish you to see, do you think I should have taken you there? I tell you she is quite able to take care of herself."

"So I believe," said Hardy; "if she were a mere giddy, light girl, setting her cap at every man who came in, it wouldn't matter so much—for her, at any rate. She can take care of herself well enough so far as the rest are concerned, but you know it isn't so with you."

You know it now, Brown ; tell the truth ; any one with half an eye can see it."

"You seem to have made pretty good use of your eyes in those two nights, anyhow," said Tom.

"I don't mind your sneers, Brown," said Hardy, as he tramped up and down with his arms locked behind him ; "I have taken on myself to speak to you about this ; I should be no true friend if I shirked it. I'm four years older than you, and have seen more of the world and of this place than you. You sha'n't go on with this folly, this sin, for want of warning."

"So it seems," said Tom, doggedly. "Now I think I've had warning enough ; suppose we drop the subject."

Hardy stopped in his walk, and turned on Tom with a look of anger. "Not yet," he said, firmly ; "you know best how and why you have done it, but you know that somehow or other you have made that girl like you."

"Suppose I have, what then ; whose business is that but mine and hers ?"

"It's the business of every one who wont stand by and see the Devil's game played under his nose if he can hinder it."

"What right have you to talk about the Devil's game to me ?" said Tom. "I'll tell you what, if you and I are to keep friends, we had better drop this subject."

"If we are to keep friends we must go to the bottom of it. There are only two endings to this sort of business, and you know it as well as I."

"A right and a wrong one, eh ? and because you call me your friend you assume that my end will be the wrong one."

"I do call you my friend, and I say the end must be the wrong one here. There's no right end. Think of your



family. You don't mean to say — you dare not tell me, that you will marry her!"

"I *dare* not tell you!" said Tom, starting up in his turn; "I dare tell you or any man any thing I please. But I wont tell you or any man any thing on compulsion."

"I repeat," went on Hardy, "you *dare* not say you mean to marry her. You don't mean it — and, as you don't, to kiss her as you did to-night,— "

"So you were sneaking behind to watch me," burst out Tom, chafing with rage, and glad to find any handle for a quarrel. The two men stood fronting one another, the younger writhing with the sense of shame and outraged pride, and longing for a fierce answer, a blow, any thing to give vent to the furies which were tearing him.

But at the end of a few seconds the elder answered, calmly and slowly, —

"I will not take those words from any man; you had better leave my rooms."

"If I do I shall not come back till you have altered your opinions."

"You need not come back till you have altered yours."

The next moment Tom was in the passage; the next, striding up and down the side of the inner quadrangle in the pale moonlight.

Poor fellow! it was no pleasant walking-ground for him. Is it worth our while to follow him up and down in his tramp? We have most of us walked the like marches, I suppose, at one time or another of our lives. The memory of them is by no means one which we can dwell on with pleasure. Times they were of blinding and driving storm, and howling winds, out of which voices, as of evil spirits, spoke close in our ears — tauntingly, temptingly, whispering to the mischievous wild

beast which lurks in the bottom of all our hearts, now, "Rouse up! art thou a man and darest not do this thing?" now, "Rise, kill and eat — It is thine, wilt thou not take it? shall the flimsy scruples of this teacher, or the sanctified cant of that, bar thy way, and baulk thee of thine own? Thou hast strength to brave them — to brave all things in earth, or heaven, or hell; put out thy strength and be a man!"

Then did not the wild beast within us shake itself, and feel its power, sweeping away all the "Thou shalt not's" which the law wrote up before us in letters of fire, with the "*I will*" of hardy, godless self-assertion? And all the while — which alone made the storm really dreadful to us — was there not the still small voice — never to be altogether silenced by the roarings of the tempest of passion, by the evil voices, by our own violent attempts to stifle it — the still small voice appealing to the man, the true man, within us, which is made in the image of God — calling on him to assert his dominion over the wild beast — to obey, and conquer, and live? Ay! and though we may have followed the other voices, have we not, while following them, confessed in our hearts, that all true strength and nobleness and manliness, was to be found in the other path? Do I say that most of us have had to tread the path, and fight this battle? Surely, I might have said all of us; all at least who have passed the bright days of their boyhood. The clear and keen intellect no less than the dull and heavy; the weak, the cold, the nervous, no less than the strong and passionate of body. The arms and the field have been divers; can have been the same, I suppose, to no two men, but the battle must have been the same, to all. One here and there may have had a foretaste of it as a boy; but it is the young man's battle and not the boy's, thank God for

it! That most hateful and fearful of all realities, call it by what name we will — self, the natural man, the old Adam — must have risen up before each of us in early manhood, if not sooner, challenging the true man within us, to which the spirit of God is speaking, to a struggle for life or death.

Gird yourself, then, for the fight, my young brother, and take up the pledge which was made for you when you were a helpless child. This world, and all others, time and eternity, for you hang upon the issue. This enemy must be met and vanquished — not finally, for no man while on earth, I suppose, can say that he is slain; but, when once known and recognized, met and vanquished he must be, by God's help, in this and that encounter, before you can be truly called a man; before you can really enjoy any one even of this world's good things.

The strife was no light one for our hero on the night in his life at which we have arrived. The quiet sky overhead, the quiet, solemn old buildings, under the shadow of which he stood, brought him no peace. He fled from them into his own rooms; he lighted his candles and tried to read, and force the whole matter from his thoughts; but it was useless: back it came again and again. The more impatient of its presence he became, the less could he shake it off. Some decision he must make; what should it be? He could have no peace till it was taken. The veil had been drawn aside thoroughly, and once for all. Twice he was on the point of returning to Hardy's rooms to thank him, confess, and consult; but the tide rolled back again. As the truth of the warning sank deeper and deeper into him, his irritation against him who had uttered it grew also. He could not and would not be fair yet. It is no easy thing for any one of us to put the whole burden of any folly or sin on our own

backs all at once. "If he had done it in any other way," thought Tom, "I might have thanked him."

Another effort to shake off the whole question. Down into the quadrangle again; lights in Drysdale's rooms. He goes up, and finds the remains of the supper, tankards full of egg-flip and cardinal, and a party playing at vingt-un. He drinks freely, careless of training or boat-racing, anxious only to drown thought. He sits down to play. The boisterous talk of some, the eager, keen looks of others, jar on him equally. One minute he is absent, the next boisterous, then irritable, then moody. A college card-party is no place to-night for him. He loses his money, is disgusted at last, and gets to his own rooms by midnight; goes to bed feverish, dissatisfied with himself, with all the world. The inexorable question pursues him even into the strange, helpless land of dreams, demanding a decision, when he has no longer power of will to choose either good or evil.

But how fared it all this time with the physician? Alas! little better than with his patient. His was the deeper and more sensitive nature. Keenly conscious of his own position, he had always avoided any but the most formal intercourse with the men in his college whom he would have liked most to live with. This was the first friendship he had made amongst them, and he valued it accordingly; and now it seemed to lie at his feet in hopeless fragments, and cast down, too, by his own hand. Bitterly he blamed himself over and over again, as he recalled every word that had passed—not for having spoken,—that he felt had been a sacred duty,—but for the harshness and suddenness with which he had done it.

"One touch of gentleness or sympathy, and I might have won him. As it was, how could he have met me otherwise than he did—hard word for hard word, hasty



answer for proud reproof? Can I go to him and recall it all? No; I can't trust myself; I shall only make matters worse. Besides, he may think that the servitor— Ah! am I there again? The old sore, self, self, self! I nurse my own pride; I value it more than my friend; and yet—no, no, I cannot go, though I think I could die for him. The sin, if sin there must be, be on my head. Would to God I could bear the sting of it! But there will be none—how can I fear? he is too true, too manly. Rough and brutal as my words have been, they have shown him the gulf. He will, he must escape it. But will he ever come back to me? I care not, so he escape.”

How can my poor words follow the strong, loving man in the wrestlings of his spirit, till far on in the quiet night he laid the whole before the Lord and slept! Yes, my brother, even so, the old, old story; but start not at the phrase, though you may never have found its meaning. He laid the whole before the Lord, in prayer, for his friend, for himself, for the whole world.

And you, too, if ever you are tried as he was,—as every man must be in one way or another,—must learn to do the like with every burden on your soul, if you would not have it hanging round you heavily, and ever more heavily, and dragging you down lower and lower till your dying day.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE STORM RAGES.

HARDY was early in the chapel the next morning. It was his week for pricking in. Every man that entered — from the early men who strolled in quietly while the bell was still ringing, to the hurrying, half-dressed loiterers who crushed in as the porter was closing the doors, and disturbed the congregation in the middle of the confession, — gave him a turn (as the expressive phrase is), and every turn only ended in disappointment. He put by his list at last, when the doors were fairly shut, with a sigh. He had half expected to see Tom come into morning chapel with a face from which he might have gathered hope that his friend had taken the right path, and then he would have little care as to how he felt towards himself; *that* would all come right in time. But Tom did not come at all, and Hardy felt it was a bad sign.

They did not meet till the evening, at the river, when the boat went down for a steady pull, and then Hardy saw at once that all was going wrong. Neither spoke to or looked at the other. Hardy expected some one to remark it, but nobody did. After the pull they walked up, and Tom as usual led the way, as if nothing had happened, into "The Choughs," Hardy paused for a moment, and then went in too. For the first time he stayed till the rest of the crew left. Tom deliberately stayed after them all. Hardy turned for a moment as he was leaving the bar, and saw him settling himself down in his chair

with an air of defiance, meant evidently for him, which would have made most men angry. Hardy was irritated for a moment, and then was filled with ruth for the poor wrong-headed youngster who was heaping up coals of fire for his own head. In his momentary anger Hardy said to himself, "Well, I have done what I can; now he must go his own way;" but such a thought was soon kicked in disgrace from his noble and well-disciplined mind. He resolved, that, let it cost what it might in the shape of loss of time and trial of temper, he would leave no stone unturned, and spare no pains, to deliver his friend of yesterday from the slough into which he was plunging. How he might best work for this end occupied his thoughts as he walked towards college.

Tom sat on at "The Choughs," glorifying himself in the thought that now, at any rate, he had shown Hardy that he wasn't to be dragooned into doing or not doing any thing. He had had a bad time of it all day, and his good angel had fought hard for victory; but self-will was too strong for the time. When he stayed behind the rest, it was more out of bravado than from any defined purpose of pursuing what he tried to persuade himself was an innocent flirtation. When he left the house some hours afterwards he was deeper in the toils than ever, and clouds were gathering over his heart. From that time he was an altered man, and altering as rapidly for the worse in body as in mind. Hardy saw the change in both, and groaned over it in secret. Miller's quick eye detected the bodily change. After the next race he drew Tom aside, and said,—

"Why, Brown, what's the matter? What have you been about? You're breaking down. Hold on, man; there's only one more night."

"Never fear," said Tom, proudly, "I shall last it out."

And in the last race he did his work again, though it cost him more than all the preceding ones put together, and when he got out of the boat he could scarcely walk or see. He felt a fierce kind of joy in his own distress, and wished that there were more races to come. But Miller, as he walked up arm in arm with the captain, took a different view of the subject.

"Well, it's all right, you see," said the captain; "but we're not a boat's length better than Oriel over the course after all. How was it we bumped them? If any thing, they drew a little on us to-night."

"Ay, half a boat's length, I should say," answered Miller. "I'm uncommonly glad it's over; Brown is going all to pieces; he wouldn't stand another race, and we haven't a man to put in his place."

"It's odd, too," said the captain; "I put him down as a faster, and he has trained well. Perhaps he has overdone it a little. However, it don't matter now."

So the races were over; and that night a great supper was held in St. Ambrose Hall, to which were bidden, and came, the crews of all the boats from Exeter upwards. The dean, with many misgivings and cautions, had allowed the hall to be used on pressure from Miller and Jervis. Miller was a bachelor and had taken a good degree, and Jervis bore a high character and was expected to do well in the schools. So the poor dean gave in to them, extracting many promises in exchange for his permission: and flitted uneasily about all the evening in his cap and gown, instead of working on at his edition of the Fathers, which occupied every minute of his leisure, and was making an old man of him before his time.

From eight to eleven the fine old pointed windows of St. Ambrose Hall blazed with light, and the choruses of songs, and the cheers, which followed the short intervals of si-



lence which the speeches made, rang out over the quadrangles, and made the poor dean amble about in a state of nervous bewilderment. Inside there was hearty feasting, such as had not been seen there, for aught I know, since the day when the king came back to "enjoy his own again." The one old cup, relic of the Middle Ages, which had survived the civil wars, — St. Ambrose's had been a right loyal college, and the plate had gone without a murmur into Charles the First's war-chest, — went round and round; and rival crews pledged one another out of it, and the massive tankards of a later day, in all good faith and good fellowship. Mailed knights, grave bishops, royal persons of either sex, and "other our benefactors," looked down on the scene from their heavy-gilded frames, and, let us hope, not unkindly. All passed off well and quietly; the out-college men were gone, the lights were out, and the butler had locked the hall-door by a quarter past eleven, and the dean returned in peace to his own rooms.

Had Tom been told a week before that he would not have enjoyed that night, that it would not have been amongst the happiest and proudest of his life, he would have set his informer down as a madman. As it was, he never once rose to the spirit of the feast, and wished it all over a dozen times. He deserved not to enjoy it; but not so Hardy, who was, nevertheless, almost as much out of tune as Tom; though the University coxswain had singled him out, named him in his speech, sat by him and talked to him for a quarter of an hour, and asked him to go to the Henley and Thames regattas in the Oxford crew.

The next evening, as usual, Tom found himself at "The Choughs" with a half a dozen others. Patty was in the bar by herself, looking prettier than ever. One by

one the rest of the men dropped off, the last saying, "Are you coming, Brown?" and being answered in the negative.

He sat still, watching Patty as she flitted about, washing up the ale glasses and putting them on their shelves, and getting out her work-basket; and then she came and sat down in her aunt's chair opposite him, and began stitching away demurely at an apron she was making. Then he broke silence, —

"Where's your aunt to-night, Patty?"

"Oh, she has gone away for a few days for a visit to some friends."

"You and I will keep house, then, together; you shall teach me all the tricks of the trade. I shall make a famous barman, don't you think?"

"You must learn to behave better, then. But I promised aunt to shut up at nine; so you must go when it strikes. Now promise me you will go."

"Go at nine! what, in half an hour? the first evening I have ever had a chance of spending alone with you; do you think it likely?" and he looked into her eyes. She turned away with a slight shiver, and a deep blush.

His nervous system had been so unusually excited in the last few days, that he seemed to know every thing that was passing in her mind. He took her hand. "Why, Patty, you're not afraid of me, surely?" he said, gently.

"No, not when you're like you are now. But you frightened me just this minute. I never saw you look so before. Has any thing happened you?"

"No, nothing. Now, then, we're going to have a jolly evening, and play Darby and Joan together," he said, turning away, and going to the bar window; "shall I shut up, Patty?"

"No, it isn't nine yet; somebody may come in."

"That's just why I mean to put the shutters up; I don't want anybody."

"Yes, but I do though. Now, I declare, Mr. Brown, if you go on shutting up, I'll run into the kitchen and sit with Dick."

"Why will you call me Mr. Brown?"

"Why, what should I call you?"

"Tom, of course."

"Oh, I never! one would think you was my brother," said Patty, looking up with a pretty pertness which she had a most bewitching way of putting on. Tom's rejoinder, and the little squabble which they had afterwards about where her work-table should stand, and other such matters may be passed over. At last he was brought to reason, and to anchor opposite his enchantress, the work-table between them; and he sat leaning back in his chair, and watching her, as she stitched away without ever lifting her eyes. He was in no hurry to break the silence. The position was particularly fascinating to him, for he had scarcely ever yet had a good look at her before, without fear of attracting attention, or being interrupted. At last he roused himself.

"Any of our men been here to-day, Patty?" he said, sitting up.

"There now, I've won," she laughed; "I said to myself, I wouldn't speak first, and I haven't. What a time you were! I thought you would never begin."

"You're a little goose! Now I begin then; who've been here to-day?"

"Of your college? let me see;" and she looked away across to the bar window, pricking her needle into the table. "There was Mr. Drysdale and some others called for a glass of ale as they passed, going out driving. Then there was Mr. Smith and them from the boats about four: and that ugly one — I can't mind his name —"

"What, Hardy?"

"Yes, that's it; he was here about half-past six, and —"

"What, Hardy here after hall?" interrupted Tom, utterly astonished.

"Yes, after your dinner up at college. He's been here two or three times lately."

"The deuce he has."

"Yes, and he talks so pleasant to aunt too. I'm sure he is a very nice gentleman, after all. He sat and talked to-night for half an hour, I should think."

"What did he talk about?" said Tom, with a sneer.

"Oh, he asked me whether I had a mother, and where I came from, and all about my bringing up, and made me feel quite pleasant. He is so nice and quiet and respectful, not like most of you. I'm going to like him very much, as you told me."

"I don't tell you so now."

"But you did say he was your great friend."

"Well, he isn't that now."

"What, have you quarrelled?"

"Yes."

"Dear, dear; how odd you gentlemen are!"

"Why, it isn't a very odd thing for men to quarrel; is it?"

"No, not in the public room. They're always quarrelling there, over their drink and the bagatelle-board; and Dick has to turn them out. But gentlemen ought to know better."

"They don't, you see, Patty."

"But what did you quarrel about?"

"Guess."

"How can I guess? What was it about?"

"About you."

"About me!" she said, looking up from her work in wonder. "How could you quarrel about me?"



"Well, I'll tell you ; he said I had no right to come here. You wont like him after that, will you, Patty?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Patty, going on with her work and looking troubled.

They sat still for some minutes. Evil thoughts crowded into Tom's head. He was in the humor for thinking evil thoughts, and, putting the worst construction on Hardy's visits, fancied he came there as his rival. He did not trust himself to speak till he had mastered his precious discovery, and put it away in the back of his heart, and weighted it down there with a good covering of hatred and revenge, to be brought out as occasion should serve. He was plunging down rapidly enough now ; but he had new motives for making the most of his time, and never played his cards better, or made more progress. When a man sits down to such a game, the Devil will take good care that he sha'n't want cunning or strength. It was ten o'clock instead of nine before he left, which he did with a feeling of triumph. Poor Patty remained behind, and shut up the bar, while Dick was locking the front door, her heart in a flutter, and her hands shaking. She hardly knew whether to laugh or cry ; she felt the change which had come over him, and was half fascinated and half repelled by it.

Tom walked quickly back to college, in a mood which I do not care to describe. The only one of his thoughts which my readers may be troubled with, put itself into some such words as these in his head : — "So, it's Abingdon fair next Thursday, and she has half promised to go with me. I know I can make it certain. Who'll be going besides? Drysdale, I'll be bound. I'll go and see him."

On entering college, he went straight to Drysdale's

rooms, and drank deeply, and played high into the short hours of the night, but found no opportunity of speaking.

Deeper and deeper yet for the next few days. Downwards and ever faster downwards he plunged, the light getting fainter and ever fainter above his head. Little good can come of dwelling on those days. He left off pulling, shunned his old friends, and lived with the very worst men he knew in college, who were ready enough to let him share all their brutal orgies.

Drysdale, who was often present, wondered at the change, which he saw plainly enough. He was sorry for it in his way, but it was no business of his. He began to think that Brown was a good enough fellow before, but would make a devilish disagreeable one if he was going to turn fast man.

At "The Choughs" all went on as if the downward path knew how to make itself smooth. Now that the races were over, and so many other attractions going on in Oxford, very few men came in to interfere with him. He was scarcely ever away from Patty's side in the evenings while her aunt was absent, and gained more and more power over her. He might have had some compassion, but that he was spurred on by hearing how Hardy haunted the place now, at times when he could not be there. He felt that there was an influence struggling with his in the girl's mind; he laid it to Hardy's door, and imputed it still, more and more, to motives as base as his own. But Abingdon fair was coming on Thursday. When he left "The Choughs" on Tuesday night, he had extracted a promise from Patty to accompany him there, and had arranged their place of meeting.

All that remained to be done was to see if Drysdale was going. Somehow he felt a disinclination to go alone

with Patty. Drysdale was the only man of those he was now living with to whom he felt the least attraction. In a vague way he clung to him; and though he never faced the thought of what he was about fairly, yet it passed through his mind that even in Drysdale's company he would be safer than if alone. It was all pitiless, blind, wild work, without rudder or compass; the wish that nothing very bad might come out of it all, however, came up in spite of him now and again, and he looked to Drysdale, and longed to become even as he.

Drysdale was going. He was very reserved on the subject, but at last confessed that he was not going alone. Tom persisted. Drysdale was too lazy and careless to keep any thing from a man who was bent on knowing it. In the end, it was arranged that he should drive Tom out the next afternoon. He did so. They stopped at a small public house some two miles out of Oxford. The cart was put up, and after carefully scanning the neighborhood they walked quickly to the door of a pretty retired cottage. As they entered, Drysdale said,—

“By Jove, I thought I caught a glimpse of your friend Hardy at that turn.”

“Friend! he's no friend of mine.”

“But didn't you see him?”

“No.”

They reached college again between ten and eleven, and parted, each to his own rooms.

To his surprise, Tom found a candle burning on his table. Round the candle was tied a piece of string, at the end of which hung a note. Whoever had put it there had clearly been anxious that he should in no case miss it when he came in. He took it up and saw that it was in Hardy's hand. He paused, and trembled as he stood. Then with an effort he broke the seal and read —

"I must speak once more. To-morrow it may be too late. If you go to Abingdon fair with her in the company of Drysdale and his mistress, or, I believe, in any company, you will return a scoundrel, and she — ; in the name of the honor of your mother and sister, in the name of God, I warn you. May He help you through it. JOHN HARDY."

Here we will drop the curtain for the next hour. At the end of that time, Tom staggered out of his room, down the staircase, across the quadrangle, up Drysdale's staircase. He paused at the door to gather some strength, ran his hands through his hair, and arranged his coat; notwithstanding, when he entered, Drysdale started to his feet, upsetting Jack from his comfortable coil on the sofa.

"Why, Brown, you're ill; have some brandy," he said, and went to his cupboard for the bottle.

Tom leant his arm on the fireplace; his head on it. The other hand hung down by his side, and Jack licked it, and he loved the dog as he felt the caress. Then Drysdale came to his side with a glass of brandy, which he took and tossed off as though it had been water. "Thank you," he said, and as Drysdale went back with the bottle, reached a large arm-chair and sat himself down in it.

"Drysdale, I sha'n't go with you to Abingdon fair to-morrow."

"Hullo! what, has the lovely Patty thrown you over?" said Drysdale, turning from the cupboard, and resuming his lounge on the sofa.

"No:" he sank back into the chair, on the arms of which his elbows rested, and put his hands up before his face, pressing them against his burning temples. Drysdale looked at him hard, but said nothing; and there was a dead silence of a minute or so, broken only by Tom's heavy breathing, which he was laboring in vain to control.



"No," he repeated at last, and the remaining words came out slowly as if they were trying to steady themselves, "but, by God, Drysdale, I *can't* take her with you, and that —" a dead pause.

"The young lady you met to-night, eh?"

Tom nodded, but said nothing.

"Well, old fellow," said Drysdale, "now you've made up your mind, I tell you, I'm devilish glad of it! I'm no saint, as you know, but I think it would have been a d——d shame if you had taken her with us."

"Thank you," said Tom, and pressed his fingers tighter on his forehead; and he *did* feel thankful for the words, though, coming from the man they did, they went into him like coals of fire.

Again there was a long pause, Tom sitting as before. Drysdale got up, and strolled up and down his room, with his hands in the pockets of his silk-lined lounging coat, taking at each turn a steady look at the other. Presently, he stopped, and took his cigar out of his mouth. "I say, Brown," he said, after another minute's contemplation of the figure before him, which bore such an unmistakable impress of wretchedness, that it made him quite uncomfortable, "why don't you cut that concern?"

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why that 'Choughs' business — I'll be hanged if it wont kill you, or make a devil of you before long, if you go on with it."

"It's not far from that now."

"So I see — and I'll tell you what, you're not the sort of fellow to go in for this kind of thing. You'd better leave it to cold-blooded brutes, like some we know — I needn't mention names."

"I'm awfully wretched, Drysdale; I've been a brute myself to you and everybody of late."

"Well, I own I don't like the new side of you. Now make up your mind to cut the whole concern, old fellow," he said, coming up good-naturedly, and putting his hand on Tom's shoulder; "it's hard to do, I dare say, but you had better make the plunge and get it over. There's wickedness enough going about without your helping to shove another one into it."

Tom groaned as he listened, but he felt that the man was trying to help him in his own way, and according to his light, as Drysdale went on expounding his own curious code of morality. When it was ended he shook Drysdale's hand, and, wishing him good-night, went back to his own rooms. The first step upwards towards the light had been made, for he felt thoroughly humbled before the man on whom he had expended in his own mind so much patronizing pity for the last half-year — whom he had been fancying he was influencing for good.

During the long hours of the night the scenes of the last few hours, of the last few days, came back to him and burnt into his soul. The gulf yawned before him now plain enough, open at his feet — black, ghastly. He shuddered at it, wondered if he should even yet fall in, felt wildly about for strength to stand firm, to retrace his steps; but found it not. He found not yet the strength he was in search of, but in the gray morning he wrote a short note.

"I shall not be able to take you to Abingdon fair to-day. You will not see me perhaps for some days. I am not well. I am very sorry. Don't think that I am changed. Don't be unhappy, or I don't know what I may do." There was no address and no signature to the note.

When the gates opened he hurried out of the college, and, having left it and a shilling with Dick (whom he

found clearing the yard, and much astonished at his appearance, and who promised to deliver it to Patty with his own hands before eight o'clock), he got back again to his own rooms, went to bed, worn out in mind and body, and slept till midday.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### NEW GROUND.

MY readers have now been steadily at Oxford for six months without moving. Most people find such a spell of the place, without a change, quite as much as they care to take; moreover it may do our hero good to let him alone for a number, that he may have time to look steadily into the pit which he has been so near falling into, which is still yawning awkwardly in his path; moreover, the exigencies of a story-teller must lead him away from home now and then. Like the rest of us, his family must have change of air, or he has to go off to see a friend properly married, or a connection buried; to wear white or black gloves with or for some one, carrying such sympathy as he can with him, that so he may come back from every journey, however short, with a wider horizon. Yes; to come back home after every stage of life's journeying with a wider horizon, more in sympathy with men and nature, knowing ever more of the righteous and eternal laws which govern them, and of the righteous and loving will which is above all, and around all, and beneath all, this must be the end and aim of all of us, or we shall be wandering about blindfold, and spending time and labor and journey-money on that which profiteth nothing. So now I must ask my readers to forget the old buildings and quadrangles of the fairest of England's cities, the caps and the gowns, the reading and rowing, for a short space, and take a flight with me to other scenes and pastures new.

The nights are pleasant in May, short and pleasant for



travel. We will leave the ancient city asleep, and do our flight in the night to save time. Trust yourselves, then, to the story-teller's aerial machine. It is but a rough affair, I own—rough and humble, unfitted for high or great flights, with no gilded panels, or dainty cushions, or C-springs,—not that we shall care about springs, by the way, until we alight on terra firma again,—still, there is much to be learned in a third-class carriage if we will only not look for the cushions and fine panels and forty miles an hour travelling in it, and will not be shocked at our fellow-passengers for being weak in their h's and smelling of fustian. Mount in it, then, you who will after this warning; the fares are holiday fares, the tickets return tickets. Take with you nothing but the poet's luggage —

“A smile for Hope, a tear for Pain,  
A breath to swell the voice of Prayer.”

and may you have a pleasant journey, for it is time that the stoker should be looking to his going gear!

So now we rise slowly in the moonlight from St. Ambrose's quadrangle, and, when we are clear of the clock-tower, steer away southwards, over Oxford city and all its sleeping wisdom and folly, over street and past spire, over Christ Church and the canons' houses, and the fountain in Tom quad; over St. Aldate's and the river, along which the moonbeams lie in a pathway of twinkling silver, over the railway sheds—no, there was then no railway, but only the quiet fields and footpaths of Hincksey hamlet. Well, no matter; at any rate, the hills beyond and Bagley Wood were there then as now: and over hills and wood we rise, catching the purr of the night-jar, the trill of the nightingale, and the first crow of the earliest cock pheasant, as he stretches his jewelled wings, conscious of his strength and his beauty, heedless of the fellows of St. John's, who slumber within sight of his perch, on whose hospitable

board he shall one day lie prone on his back, with fair larded breast turned upwards for the carving knife, having crowed his last crow. He knows it not; what matters it to him? If he knew it, could a Bagley Woodcock pheasant desire a better ending?

We pass over the vale beyond; hall and hamlet, church and meadow, and copse folded in mist and shadow below us, each hamlet holding in its bosom the materials of three-volumed novels by the dozen, if we could only pull off the roofs of the houses and look steadily into the interiors; but our destination is further yet. The faint white streak behind the distant Chilterns reminds us that we have no time for gossip by the way; May nights are short, and the sun will be up by four. No matter; our journey will now be soon over, for the broad vale is crossed, and the chalk hills and downs beyond. Larks quiver up by us, "higher, ever higher," hastening up to get a first glimpse of the coming monarch, careless of food, flooding the fresh air with song. Steady plodding rooks labor along below us, and lively starlings rush by on the lookout for the early worm; lark and swallow, rook and starling, each on his appointed round. The sun arises, and they get them to it; he is up now, and these breezy uplands over which we hang are swimming in the light of horizontal rays, though the shadows and mists still lie on the wooded dells which slope away southwards.

Here let us bring to, over the village of Englebourn, and try to get acquainted with the outside of the place before the good folk are about and we have to go down among them, and their sayings and doings.

The village lies on the southern slopes of the Berkshire hills, on the opposite side to that under which our hero was born. Another soil altogether is here, we remark in the first place. This is nobu chalk, this high knoll which

rises above — one may almost say hangs over — the village, crowned with Scotch firs, its sides tufted with gorse and heather. It is the Hawk's Lynch, the favorite resort of Englebourn folk, who come up — for the view, for the air, because their fathers and mothers came up before them; because they came up themselves as children — from an instinct which moves them all in leisure hours and Sunday evenings, when the sun shines and the birds sing, whether they care for view or air or not. Something guides all their feet hitherward; the children, to play hide-and-seek and look for nests in the gorse-bushes; young men and maidens, to saunter and look and talk, as they will till the world's end, — or as long, at any rate, as the Hawk's Lynch and Englebourn last, — and to cut their initials, enclosed in a true lover's knot, on the short rabbit's turf; steady married couples, to plod along together consulting on hard times and growing families; even old tottering men, who love to sit at the feet of the firs, with chins leaning on their sticks, prattling of days long past to any one who will listen, or looking silently with dim eyes into the summer air, feeling, perhaps, in their spirits after a wider and more peaceful view which will soon open for them. A common knoll, open to all, up in the silent air, well away from every-day Englebourn life, with the Hampshire range and the distant Beacon Hill lying soft on the horizon, and nothing higher between you and the southern sea, what a blessing the Hawk's Lynch is to the village folk, one and all! May Heaven and a thankless soil long preserve it and them from an enclosure under the Act!

There is much temptation lying about, though, for the enclosers of the world. The rough common land, you see, stretches over the whole of the knoll, and down to its base, and away along the hills behind, of which the Hawk's

Lynch is an outlying spur. Rough common land, broken only by pine woods of a few acres each in extent, an occasional woodman's or squatter's cottage and little patch of attempted garden. But immediately below, and on each flank of the spur, and half-way up the slopes, come small farm enclosures breaking here and there the belt of woodlands, which generally lies between the rough, wild upland and the cultivated country below. As you stand on the knoll you can see the common land just below you at its foot narrow into a mere road, with a border of waste on each side, which runs into Englebourn Street. At the end of the straggling village stands the church with its square tower, a lofty gray stone building, with bits of fine decorated architecture about it, but much of churchwarden Gothic supervening. The churchyard is large, and the graves, as you can see plainly, even from this distance, are all crowded on the southern side. The rector's sheep are feeding in the northern part nearest to us, and a small gate at one corner opens into his garden. The rectory looks large and comfortable, and its grounds well cared for and extensive, with a rookery of elms at the lawn's end. It is the chief house of the place, for there is no resident squire. The principal street contains a few shops, some dozen, perhaps, in all; and several farmhouses lie a little back from it, with gardens in front, and yards and barns and orchards behind; and there are two public houses. The other dwellings are mere cottages, and very bad ones for the most part, with floors below the level of the street. Almost every house in the village is thatched, which adds to the beauty, though not to the comfort, of the place. The rest of the population who do not live in the street are dotted about the neighboring lanes, chiefly towards the west, on our right as we look down from the Hawk's Lynch. On this side the country is more open, and here



most of the farmers live, as we may see by the number of homesteads. And there is a small brook on that side, too, which with careful damming is made to turn a mill, there where you see the clump of poplars. On our left as we look down, the country to the east of the village, is thickly wooded; but we can see that there is a village green on that side, and a few scattered cottages, the furthest of which stands looking out like a little white eye, from the end of a dense copse.

Beyond it there is no sign of habitation for some two miles; then you can see the tall chimneys of a great house, and a well-timbered park round it. The Grange is not in Englebourn parish — happily for that parish, one is sorry to remark. It must be a very bad squire who does not do more good than harm by living in a country village. But there are very bad squires, and the owner of the Grange is one of them. He is, however, for the most part, an absentee, so that we are little concerned with him, and in fact, have only to notice this one of his bad habits, that he keeps that long belt of woodlands, which runs into Englebourn parish, and comes almost up to the village, full of hares and pheasants. He has only succeeded to the property some three or four years, and yet the head of game on the estate, and above all in the woods, has trebled or quadrupled. Pheasants by hundreds are reared under hens, from eggs bought in London, and run about the keepers' houses as tame as barn-door fowls all the summer. When the first party comes down for the first *battue*, early in October, it is often as much as the beaters can do to persuade these pampered fowls that they are wild game, whose duty it is to get up and fly away and be shot at. However, they soon learn more of the world, — such of them, at least, as are not slain, — and are unmistakable wild birds in a few days. Then they take

to roosting further from their old haunts, more in the outskirts of the woods, and the time comes for others besides the squire's guests to take their education in hand, and teach pheasants at least that they are no native British birds. These are a wild set, living scattered about the wild country; turf-cutters, broom-makers, squatters, with indefinite occupations and nameless habits, a race hated of keepers and constables. These have increased and flourished of late years; and, notwithstanding the imprisonments and transportations which deprive them periodically of the most enterprising members of their community, one and all give thanks for the day when the owner of the Grange took to pheasant breeding. If the demoralization stopped with them, little harm might come of it, as they would steal fowls in the homesteads if there were no pheasants in the woods — which latter are less dangerous to get, and worth more when gotten. But, unhappily, this method of earning a livelihood has strong attractions, and is catching; and the cases of farm laborers who get into trouble about game are more frequent, season by season, in the neighboring parishes, and Englebourn is no better than the rest. And the men are not likely to be much discouraged from these practices, or taught better by the farmers; for, if there is one thing more than another that drives that sturdy set of men, the Englebourn yeomen, into a frenzy, it is talk of the game in the Grange covers. Not that they dislike sport; they like it too well, and, moreover, have been used to their fair share of it. For the late squire left the game entirely in their hands. "You know best how much game your land will carry without serious damage to the crops," he used to say. "I like to show my friends a fair day's sport when they are with me, and to have enough game to supply the house and make a few presents. Beyond that it

is no affair of mine. You can course whenever you like; and let me know when you want a day's shooting, and you shall have it." Under this system the yeomen became keen sportsmen; they and all their laborers took an interest in preserving, and the whole district would have risen on a poacher. The keeper's place became a sinecure, and the squire had as much game as he wanted without expense, and was, moreover, the most popular man in the county. Even after the new man came, and all was changed, that mere revocation of their sporting liberties, and the increase of game, unpopular as these things were, would not alone have made the farmers so bitter, and have raised that sense of outraged justice in them. But with these changes came in a custom new in the country — the custom of selling the game. At first the report was not believed; but soon it became notorious that no head of game from the Grange estates was ever given away, that not only did the tenants never get a brace of birds or a hare, or the laborers a rabbit, but not one of the gentlemen who helped to kill the game ever found any of the bag in his dog-cart after the day's shooting. Nay, so shameless had the system become, and so highly was the art of turning the game to account cultivated at the Grange, that the keepers sold powder and shot to any of the guests who had emptied their own belts or flasks at something over the market retail price. The light cart drove to the market-town twice a week in the season, loaded heavily with game, but more heavily with the hatred and scorn of the farmers; and, if deep and bitter curses could break patent axles or necks, the new squire and his game-cart would not long have vexed the country side. As it was, not a man but his own tenants would salute him in the market-place; and these repaid themselves for the unwilling courtesy by bitter reflections on a squire who was

mean enough to pay his butcher's and poulterer's bill out of their pockets.

Alas, that the manly instinct of sport which is so strong in all of us Englishmen — which sends Oswell's single-handed against the mightiest beasts that walk the earth, and takes the poor cockney journeyman out a ten miles' walk almost before daylight on the rare summer holiday mornings, to angle with rude tackle in reservoir or canal — should be dragged through such mire as this in many an English shire in our day. If English landlords want to go on shooting game much longer, they must give up selling it. For if selling game becomes the rule, and not the exception (as it seems likely to do before long), good-by to sport in England. Every man who loves his country more than his pleasures or his pocket — and, thank God, that includes the great majority of us yet, however much we may delight in gun and rod, let Mr. Bright and every demagogue in the land say what they please — will cry, "Down with it," and lend a hand to put it down forever.

But to return to our perch on the Hawk's Lynch above Englebourn village. As I was saying just now, when the sight of the distant Grange and its woods interrupted me, there is no squire living here. The rector is the fourth of his race who holds the family living — a kind, easy-going, gentlemanly old man, a Doctor of Divinity, as becomes his position, though he only went into orders because there was the living ready for him. In his day he had been a good magistrate and neighbor, living with, and much in the same way as, the squires round about! But his contemporaries had dropped off one by one; his own health had long been failing; his wife was dead; and the young generation did not seek him. His work and the parish had no real hold on him; so he had nothing to fall back on, and had become a confirmed invalid, seldom



leaving the house and garden even to go to church, and thinking more of his dinner and his health than of all other things in earth or heaven.

The only child who remained at home with him was a daughter, a girl of nineteen or thereabouts, whose acquaintance we shall make presently, and who was doing all that a good heart and sound head prompted in nursing an old hypochondriac and filling his place in the parish. But though the old man was weak and selfish, he was kind in his way, and ready to give freely, or to do any thing which his daughter suggested for the good of his people, provided the trouble were taken off his shoulders. In the year before our tale opens he had allowed some thirty acres of his glebe to be parcelled out in allotments amongst the poor; and his daughter spent almost what she pleased in clothing-clubs, and sick-clubs, and the school, without a word from him. Whenever he did remonstrate, she managed to get what she wanted out of the house-money, or her own allowance.

We must make acquaintance with such other of the inhabitants as it concerns us to know in the course of the story; for it is broad daylight, and the villagers will be astir directly. Folk who go to bed before nine, after a hard day's work, get into the habit of turning out soon after the sun calls them. So now, descending from the Hawk's Lynch, we will alight at the east end of Engle-bourn, opposite the little white cottage which looks out at the end of the great wood, near the village green.

Soon after five on that bright Sunday morning, Harry Winburn unbolted the door of his mother's cottage, and stepped out in his shirt-sleeves on to the little walk in front, paved with pebbles. Perhaps some of my readers will recognize the name of an old acquaintance, and wonder how he got here; so I shall explain at once. Soon after

our hero went to school, Harry's father had died of a fever. He had been a journeyman blacksmith, and in the receipt, consequently, of rather better wages than generally fall to the lot of the peasantry, but not enough to leave much of a margin over current expenditure. Moreover, the Winburns had always been open-handed with whatever money they had; so that all he left for his widow and child, of worldly goods, was their "few sticks" of furniture, £5 in the Savings-bank, and the money from his burial-club, which was not more than enough to give him a creditable funeral—that object of honorable ambition to all the independent poor. He left, however, another inheritance to them, which is, in price, above rubies, neither shall silver be named in comparison thereof,—the inheritance of an honest name, of which his widow was proud, and which was not likely to suffer in her hands.

After the funeral, she removed to Englebourn, her own native village, and kept her old father's house, till his death. He was one of the woodmen to the Grange, and lived in the cottage at the corner of the wood in which his work lay. When he, too, died, hard times came on Widow Winburn. The steward allowed her to keep on the cottage. The rent was a sore burden to her, but she would sooner have starved than leave it. Parish relief was out of the question for her father's child and her husband's widow; so she turned her hand to every odd job which offered, and went to work in the fields when nothing else could be had. Whenever there was sickness in the place, she was an untiring nurse; and at one time, for some nine months, she took the office of postman, and walked daily some nine miles through a severe winter. The fatigue and exposure had broken down her health, and made her an old woman before her time. At last, in a lucky hour, the doctor came to hear of her praise-

worthy struggles, and gave her the rectory washing, which had made her life a comparatively easy one again.

During all this time her poor neighbors had stood by her as the poor do stand by one another, helping her in numberless small ways, so that she had been able to realize the great object of her life, and keep Harry at school till he was nearly fourteen. By this time he had learned all that the village pedagogue could teach, and had, in fact, become an object of mingled pride and jealousy to that worthy man, who had his misgivings lest Harry's fame as a scholar should eclipse his own before many years were over.

Mrs. Winburn's character was so good, that no sooner was her son ready for a place than a place was ready for him; he stepped at once into the dignity of carter's boy, and his earnings, when added to his mother's, made them comfortable enough. Of course, she was wrapped up in him, and believed that there was no such boy in the parish. And indeed she was nearer the truth than most mothers, for he soon grew into a famous specimen of a countryman; tall and lithe, full of nervous strength, and not yet bowed down or stiffened by the constant toil of a laborer's daily life. In these matters, however, he had rivals in the village; but in intellectual accomplishments he was unrivalled. He was full of learning according to the village standard, could write and cipher well, was fond of reading such books as came in his way, and spoke his native English almost without an accent. He is one-and-twenty at the time when our story takes him up, a thoroughly skilled laborer, the best hedger and ditcher in the parish; and when his blood is up, he can shear twenty sheep in a day without razing the skin, or mow for sixteen hours at a stretch, with rests of half an hour for meals twice in the day.

Harry shaded his eyes with his hand for a minute, as he stood outside the cottage drinking in the fresh pure air, laden with the scent of the honeysuckle which he had trained over the porch, and listening to the chorus of linnets and finches from the copse at the back of the house, and then set about the household duties, which he always made it a point of honor to attend to himself on Sundays. First he unshuttered the little lattice-window of the room on the ground-floor; a simple operation enough, for the shutter was a mere wooden flap, which was closed over the window at night, and bolted with a wooden bolt on the outside, and thrown back against the wall in the daytime. Any one who would could have opened it at any moment of the night; but the poor sleep sound without bolts. Then he took the one old bucket of the establishment, and strode away to the well on the village-green, and filled it with clear cold water, doing the same kind office for the vessels of two or three rosy little damsels and boys, of ages varying from ten to fourteen, who were already astir, and to whom the winding-up of the parish chain and bucket would have been a work of difficulty. Returning to the cottage, he proceeded to fill his mother's kettle, sweep the hearth, strike a light, and make up the fire with a faggot from the little stack in the corner of the garden. Then he hauled the three-legged round table before the fire, and dusted it carefully over, and laid out the black japan tea-tray with two delf cups and saucers of gorgeous pattern, and diminutive plates to match, and placed the sugar and slop basins, the big loaf and small piece of salt butter, in their accustomed places, and the little black teapot on the hob to get properly warm. There was little more to be done indoors, for the furniture was scanty enough; but every thing in turn received its fair share of attention, and the little room, with its sunken tiled floor and yellow-



washed walls, looked cheerful and homely. Then Harry turned his attention to the shed of his own contriving which stood beside the faggot-stack, and from which expostulatory and plaintive grunts had been issuing ever since his first appearance at the door, telling of a faithful and useful friend who was sharp set on Sunday mornings, and desired his poor breakfast, and to be dismissed for the day to pick up the rest of his livelihood with his brethren porkers of the village on the green and in the lanes. Harry served out to the porker the poor mess which the wash of the cottage and the odds and ends of the little garden afforded; which that virtuous animal forthwith began to discuss with both fore-feet in the trough,—by way, I suppose, of adding to the flavor,—while his master scratched him gently between the ears and on the back with a short stick till the repast was concluded. Then he opened the door of the sty, and the grateful animal rushed out into the lane, and away to the green with a joyful squeal and flirt of his hind quarters in the air; and Harry, after picking a bunch of wall-flowers, and pansies, and hyacinths, a line of which flowers skirted the narrow garden walk, and putting them in a long-necked glass which he took from the mantelpiece, proceeded to his morning ablutions, ample materials for which remained at the bottom of the family bucket, which he had put down on a little bench by the side of the porch. These finished, he retired indoors to shave and dress himself.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ENGLEBOURN VILLAGE.

DAME WINBURN was not long after her son, and they sat down together to breakfast in their best Sunday clothes — she, in plain large white cap, which covered all but a line of gray hair, a black stuff gown reaching to neck and wrists, and small silk neckerchief put on like a shawl; a thin, almost gaunt, old woman, whom the years had not used tenderly, and who showed marks of their usage — but a resolute, high-couraged soul, who had met hard times in the face, and could meet them again if need were. She spoke in broad Berkshire, and was otherwise a homely body, but self-possessed and without a shade of real vulgarity in her composition.

The widow looked with some anxiety at Harry as he took his seat. Although something of a rustic dandy, of late he had not been so careful in this matter as usual; but, in consequence of her reproaches, on this Sunday there was nothing to complain of. His black velvet shooting-coat and cotton plush waistcoat, his brown corduroy knee breeches and gaiters sat on him well, and gave the world assurance of a well-to-do man, for few of the Englebourn laborers rose above smock-frocks and fustian trousers. He wore a blue bird's-eye handkerchief round his neck, and his shirt, though coarse in texture, was as white as the sun and the best laundress in Englebourn could manage to bleach it. There was nothing to find fault with in his dress therefore, but still his mother did

not feel quite comfortable as she took stealthy glances at him. Harry was naturally rather a reserved fellow, and did not make much conversation himself, and his mother felt a little embarrassed on this particular morning.

It was not, therefore, until Dame Winburn had finished her first slice of bread and butter, and had sipped the greater part of her second dish of tea out of her saucer, that she broke silence.

"I minded thy business last night, Harry, when I wur up at the rectory about the washin'. It's my belief as thou'lt get t'other 'lotment next quarter-day. The doctor spoke very kind about it, and said as how he heerd as high a character o' thee, young as thee bist, as of are' a man in the parish, and as how he wur set on lettin' the lots to they as'd do best by 'em; only he said as the farmers went agin givin' more nor an acre to any man as worked for *them*, and the doctor, you see, he don't like to go altogether agin the vestry folk."

"What business is it o' theirs," said Harry, "so long as they get their own work done? There's scarce one on 'em as hasn't more land already nor he can keep as should be, and for all that they want to snap up every bit as falls vacant, so as no poor man shall get it."

"'Tis mostly so with them as has," said his mother, with a half-puzzled look; "Scriptur says as to them shall be given, and they shall have more abundant." Dame Winburn spoke hesitatingly, and looked doubtfully at Harry, as a person who has shot with a strange gun, and knows not what effect the bolt may have. Harry was brought up all standing by this unexpected quotation of his mother; but, after thinking for a few moments while he cut himself a slice of bread, replied, —

"It don't say as those shall have more that can't use what they've got already. 'Tis a deal more like Naboth's

vineyard for aught as I can see. But 'tis little odds to me which way it goes."

"How canst talk so, Harry?" said his mother, reproachfully; "thou knows't thou wast set on it last fall, like a wapse on sugar. Why, scarce a day passed but thou wast up to the rectory, to see the doctor about it; and now thou'rt like to get it, thou'lt not go against 'un."

Harry looked out at the open door, without answering. It was quite true that, in the last autumn, he had been very anxious to get as large an allotment as he could into his own hands, and that he had been forever up towards the rectory, but perhaps not always on the allotment business. He was naturally a self-reliant, shrewd fellow, and felt that if he could put his hand on three or four acres of land, he could soon make himself independent of the farmers. He knew that at harvest-times, and whenever there was a pinch for good laborers, they would be glad enough to have him; while at other times, with a few acres of his own, he would be his own master, and could do much better for himself. So he had put his name down first on the doctor's list, taken the largest lot he could get, and worked it so well, that his crops, amongst others, had been a sort of village-show last harvest-time. Many of the neighboring allotments stood out in sad contrast to those of Harry and the more energetic of the peasantry, and lay by the side of these latter, only half worked and full of weeds, and the rent was never ready. It was worse than useless to let matters go on thus, and the question arose, what was to be done with the neglected lots. Harry, and all the men like him, applied at once for them; and their eagerness to get them had roused some natural jealousy amongst the farmers, who began to foresee that the new system might shortly leave them with none but the worst laborers. So the vestry had pressed on the doctor, as



Dame Winburn said, not to let any man have more than an acre, or an acre and a half; and the well-meaning, easy-going, invalid old man couldn't make up his mind what to do. So here was May come again, and the neglected lots were still in the nominal occupation of the idlers. The doctor got no rent, and was annoyed at the partial failure of a scheme which he had not indeed originated, but for which he had taken much credit to himself. The negligent occupiers grumbled that they were not allowed a drawback for manure, and that no pigstys were put up for them. "'Twas allers understood so," they maintained, "and they'd never ha' took to the lots but for that." The good men grumbled that it would be too late now for them to do more than clean the lots of weeds this year. The farmers grumbled that it was always understood no man should have more than one lot. The poor rector had led his flock into a miry place with a vengeance. People who cannot make up their minds breed trouble in other places besides country villages. However quiet and out of the way the place may be, there is always some *quasi* public topic which stands, to the rural Englishman, in the place of treaty, or budget, or reform-bill. So the great allotment question, for the time, was that which exercised the minds of the inhabitants of Englebourn; and until lately no one had taken a keener interest in it than Harry Winburn. But that interest had now much abated, and so Harry looked through the cottage-door, instead of answering his mother.

"'Tis my belief as you med amost hev it for the axin'," Dame Winburn began again, when she found that he would not re-open the subject himself. "The young missus said as much to me herself last night. Ah! to be sure, things 'd go better if she had the guidin' on 'em."

"I'm not going after it any more, mother. We can

keep the bits o' sticks here together without it while you be alive; and if any thing was to happen to you, I don't think I should stay in these parts. But it don't matter what becomes o' me; I can earn a livelihood anywhere."

Dame Winburn paused a moment, before answering, to subdue her vexation, and then said, "How can 'ee let hankerin' arter a lass take the heart out o' thee so? Hold up thy head, and act a bit measterful. The more thou makest o' thyself, the more like thou art to win."

"Did you hear aught of her, mother, last night?" replied Harry, taking advantage of this ungracious opening to speak of the subject which was uppermost in his mind.

"I heerd she wur going on well," said his mother.

"No likelihood of her comin' home?"

"Not as I could make out. Why, she hev'n't been gone not four months. Now, do'ee pluck up a bit, Harry; and be more like thyself."

"Why, mother, I've not missed a day's work since Christmas; so there aint much to find fault with."

"Nay, Harry, 'tisin't thy work. Thou wert always good at thy work, praise God. Thou'rt thy father's own son for that. But thou dostn't keep about like, and take thy place-wi' the lave on 'em since Christmas. Thou look'st haggad at times, and folk'll see it, and talk about thee afore long."

"Let 'em talk. I mind their talk no more than last year's wind," said Harry, abruptly.

"But thy old mother does," she said, looking at him with eyes full of pride and love; and so Harry, who was a right good son, began to inquire what it was which was specially weighing on his mother's mind, determined to do any thing in reason to replace her on the little harmless social pinnacle from which she was wont to look down on all the other mothers and sons of the parish. He soon

found out that her present grievance arose from his having neglected his place as ringer of the heavy bell in the village peal on the two preceding Sundays; and, as this post was in some sort corresponding to stroke of the boat at Oxford, her anxiety was reasonable enough. So Harry promised to go to ringing in good time that morning, and then set about little odds and ends of jobs till it would be time to start. Dame Winburn went to her cooking and other household duties, which were pretty well got under when her son took his hat and started for the belfry. She stood at the door with a half-peeled potato in one hand, shading her eyes with the other, as she watched him striding along the raised footpath under the elms, when the sound of light footsteps and pleasant voices coming up from the other direction made her turn round, and drop a courtesy as the rector's daughter and another young lady stopped at her door.

"Good morning, Betty," said the former; "here's a bright Sunday morning at last; isn't it?"

"'Tis, indeed, miss; but where hev'ee been to?"

"Oh, we've only been for a little walk before school-time. This is my cousin, Betty. She hasn't been at Englebourn since she was quite a child; so I've been taking her to the Hawk's Lynch to see our view."

"And you can't think how I have enjoyed it," said her cousin; "it is so still and beautiful."

"I've heerd say as there aint no such a place for thretty mile round," said Betty, proudly. "But do 'ee come in, tho', and sit'ee down a bit," she added, bustling inside her door, and beginning to rub down a chair with her apron; "'tis a smart step for gentlefolk to walk afore church." Betty's notions of the walking powers of gentlefolk were very limited.

"No, thank you, we must be getting on," said Miss

Winter ; "but how lovely your flowers are. Look, Mary, did you ever see such double pansies? We've nothing like them at the rectory."

"Do'ee take some," said Betty, emerging again, and beginning to pluck a handful of her finest flowers ; "'tis all our Harry's doing ; he's 'mazin partickler about seeds."

"He seems to make every thing thrive, Betty. There, that's plenty, thank you. We wont take many, for fear they should fade before church is over."

"Oh, dont'ee be afeard, there's plenty more ; and you be as welcome as the day."

Betty never said a truer word ; she was one of the real open-handed sort, who are found mostly amongst those who have the least to give. They or any one else were welcome to the best she had.

So the young ladies took the flowers, and passed on towards the Sunday school.

The rector's daughter might have been a year or so older than her companion ; she looked more. Her position in the village had been one of much anxiety, and she was fast getting an old head on young shoulders. The other young lady was a slip of a girl just coming out ; in fact, this was the first visit which she had ever paid out of leading strings. She had lived in a happy home, where she had always been trusted and loved, and perhaps a thought too much petted.

There are some natures which attract petting ; you can't help doing your best to spoil them in this way, and it is satisfactory therefore to know (as the fact is) that they are just the ones which cannot be so spoiled.

Miss Mary was one of these. Trustful, for she had never been tricked ; fearless, for she had never been cowed ; pure and bright as the Englebourn brook at fifty yards from its parent spring in the chalk, for she had a



pure and bright nature, and had come in contact as yet with nothing which could soil or cast a shadow! What wonder that her life gave forth light and music as it glided on, and that every one who knew her was eager to have her with them, to warm themselves in the light and rejoice in the music.

Besides all her other attractions, or in consequence of them for any thing I know, she was one of the merriest young women in the world, always ready to bubble over and break out into clear laughter on the slightest provocation. And provocation had not been wanting during the last two days which she had spent with her cousin. As usual, she had brought sunshine with her, and the old doctor had half forgotten his numerous complaints and grievances for the time. So the cloud, which generally hung over the house, had been partially lifted, and Mary, knowing and suspecting nothing of the dark side of life at Englebourn rectory, rallied her cousin on her gravity, and laughed till she cried at the queer ways and talk of the people about the place.

As soon as they were out of hearing of Dame Winburn, Mary began, —

“Well, Katie, I can’t say that you have mended your case at all.”

“Surely, you can’t deny that there is a great deal of character in Betty’s face?” said Miss Winter.

“Oh, plenty of character; all your people, as soon as they begin to stiffen a little and get wrinkles, seem to be full of character, and I enjoy it much more than beauty; but we were talking about beauty, you know.”

“Betty’s son is the handsomest young man in the parish,” said Miss Winter; “and I must say I don’t think you could find a better-looking one anywhere.”

“Then I can’t have seen him.”

"Indeed you have ; I pointed him out to you at the post-office yesterday. Don't you remember ? he was waiting for a letter."

"Oh, yes ! now I remember. Well, he was better than most. But the faces of your young people, in general, are not interesting, — I don't mean the children, but the young men and women, — and they are awkward and clownish in their manners, without the quaintness of the elder generation, who are the funniest old dears in the world."

"They will all be quaint enough as they get older. You must remember the sort of life they lead. They get their notions very slowly, and they must have notions in their heads before they can show them on their faces."

"Well, your Betty's son looked as if he had a notion of hanging himself yesterday."

"It's no laughing matter, Mary. I hear he is desperately in love."

"Poor fellow ! that makes a difference, of course. I hope he wont carry out his notion. Who is it ? do you know ? Do tell me all about it."

"Our gardener's daughter, I believe. Of course, I never meddle with these matters, but one can't help hearing the servants' gossip. I think it likely to be true, for he was about our premises at all sorts of times until lately, and I never see him now that she is away."

"Is she pretty ?" said Mary, who was getting interested.

"Yes, she is our belle. In fact, they are the two beauties of the parish."

"Fancy that cross-grained old Simon having a pretty daughter. Oh, Katie, look here, who is this figure of fun ?"

The figure of fun was a middle-aged man of small stat-

ure, and very bandy-legged, dressed in a blue coat and brass buttons, and carrying a great bass-viol bigger than himself, in a rough baize cover. He came out of a foot-path into the road just before them, and on seeing them touched his hat to Miss Winter, and then fidgeted along with his load, and jerked his head in a deprecatory manner away from them as he walked on, with the sort of look and action which a favorite terrier uses when his master holds out a lighted cigar to his nose. He was the village tailor and constable, also the principal performer in the church-music which obtained in Englebourn. In the latter capacity he had of late come into collision with Miss Winter. For this was another of the questions which divided the parish—the great church-music question. From time immemorial, at least ever since the gallery at the west end had been built, the village psalmody had been in the hands of the occupiers of that Protestant structure. In the middle of the front row sat the musicians, three in number, who played respectively a bass-viol, a fiddle, and a clarionet. On one side of them were two or three young women, who sang treble—shrill, ear-piercing treble,—with a strong nasal Berkshire drawl in it. On the other side of the musicians sat the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and other tradesmen of the place. Tradesman means in that part of the country what we mean by artisan, and these were naturally allied more with the laborers, and consorted with them. So far as church-going was concerned, they formed a sort of independent opposition, sitting in the gallery, instead of in the nave, where the farmers and the two or three principal shopkeepers—the great landed and commercial interests—regularly sat and slept, and where the two publicans occupied pews, but seldom made even the pretence of worshipping.

The rest of the gallery was filled by the able-bodied male peasantry. The old worn-out men generally sat below in the free seats; the women also, and some few boys. But the hearts of these latter were in the gallery,—a seat on the back benches of which was a sign that they had indued the *toga virilis*, and were thenceforth free from maternal and pastoral tutelage in the matter of church-going. The gallery thus constituted had gradually usurped the psalmody as their particular and special portion of the service; they left the clerk and the school children, aided by such of the aristocracy below as cared to join, to do the responses; but, when singing time came, they reigned supreme. The slate on which the Psalms were announced was hung out from before the centre of the gallery, and the clerk, leaving his place under the reading desk, marched up there to give them out. He took this method of preserving his constitutional connection with the singing, knowing that otherwise he could not have maintained the rightful position of his office in this matter. So matters had stood until shortly before the time of our story.

The present curate, however, backed by Miss Winter, had tried a reform. He was a quiet man, with a wife and several children, and small means. He had served in the diocese ever since he had been ordained, in a hum-drum sort of way, going where he was sent for, and performing his routine duties reasonably well, but without showing any great aptitude for his work. He had little interest, and had almost given up expecting promotion, which he certainly had done nothing particular to merit. But there was one point on which he was always ready to go out of his way, and take a little trouble. He was a good musician, and had formed choirs at all his former curacies.

Soon after his arrival, therefore, he, in concert with Miss Winter, had begun to train the children in church-



music. A small organ, which had stood in a passage in the rectory for many years, had been repaired, and appeared first at the schoolroom, and at length under the gallery of the church; and it was announced one week to the party in possession, that, on the next Sunday, the constituted authorities would take the church-music into their own hands. Then arose a strife, the end of which had nearly been to send the gallery off in a body, headed by the offended bass-viol, to the small red-brick little Bethel at the other end of the village. Fortunately, the curate had too much good sense to drive matters to extremities, and so alienate the parish constable, and a large part of his flock, though he had not tact or energy enough to bring them round to his own views. So a compromise was come to; and the curate's choir were allowed to chant the Psalms and Canticles, which had always been read before, while the gallery remained triumphant masters of the regular Psalms.

My readers will now understand why Miss Winter's salutation to the musical constable was not so cordial as it was to the other villagers whom they had come across previously.

Indeed, Miss Winter, though she acknowledged the constable's salutation, did not seem inclined to encourage him to accompany them, and talk his mind out, although he was going the same way with them; and instead of drawing him out, as was her wont in such cases, went on talking herself to her cousin.

The little man walked out in the road, evidently in trouble of mind. He did not like to drop behind or go ahead without some further remark from Miss Winter, and yet could not screw up his courage to the point of opening the conversation himself. So he ambled on alongside the footpath on which they were walking, show-

ing his discomfort by a twist of his neck every few seconds (as though he were nodding at them with the side of his head) and perpetual shiftings of his bass-viol, and hunching up of one shoulder.

The conversation of the young ladies under these circumstances was of course forced ; and Miss Mary, though infinitely delighted at the meeting, soon began to pity their involuntary companion. She was full of the sensitive instinct which the best sort of women have to such a marvellous extent, and which tells them at once and infallibly if any one in their company has even a creased rose-leaf next their moral skin.

Before they had walked a hundred yards she was interceding for the rebellious constable.

"Katie," she said softly, in French, "do speak to him. The poor man is frightfully uncomfortable."

"It serves him right," answered Miss Winter, in the same language ; "you don't know how impertinent he was the other day to Mr. Walker. And he wont give way on the least point, and leads the rest of the old singers, and makes them as stubborn as himself."

"But do look how he is winking and jerking his head at you. You really mustn't be so cruel to him, Katie. I shall have to begin talking to him if you don't."

Thus urged, Miss Winter opened the conversation by asking after his wife, and, when she had ascertained "that his missus wur pretty middlin'," made some other commonplace remark, and relapsed into silence. By the help of Mary, however, a sort of disjointed dialogue was kept up till they came to the gate which led up to the school, into which the children were trooping by two's and three's. Here the ladies turned in, and were going up the walk, towards the school door, when the constable summoned up courage to speak on the matter which was troubling

him, and, resting the bass-viol carefully on his right foot, called after them,—

“Oh, please, marm! Miss Winter!”

“Well,” she said, quietly, turning round, “what do you wish to say?”

“Wy, please, marm, I hopes as you don’t think I be any ways unked, ’bout this here quire-singin’, as they calls it—I’m sartin you knows as there aint a’most nothing I wouldn’t do to please ee.”

“Well, you know how to do it very easily,” she said when he paused. “I don’t ask you even to give up your music and try to work with us, though I think you might have done that. I only ask you to use some psalms and tunes which are fit to be used in a church.”

“To be sure us ool. ’Taint we as wants no new-fangled tunes; them as we sings be aal owld ones as ha’ been used in our church ever since I can mind. But you only choose thaay as you likes out o’ the book, and we be ready to kep to they.”

“I think Mr. Walker made a selection for you some weeks ago,” said Miss Winter; “did not he?”

“’Ees, but ’tis narra mossel o’ use for we to try his ’goriums and sich like. I hopes you wunt be offended wi’ me, miss, for I be telling naught but truth.” He spoke louder as they got nearer to the school door, and, as they were opening it, shouted his last shot after them, “’Tis na good to try thaay tunes o’ his’n, miss. When us praises God, us likes to praise un joyful.”

“There, you hear that, Mary,” said Miss Winter. “You’ll soon begin to see why I look grave. There never was such a hard parish to manage. Nobody will do what they ought. I never can get them to do any thing. Perhaps we may manage to teach the children better, that’s my only comfort.”

"But, Katie dear, what *do* the poor things sing? Psalms, I hope."

"Oh, yes; but they choose all the odd ones on purpose, I believe. Which class will you take?"

And so the young ladies settled to their teaching, and the children in her class all fell in love with Mary before church-time.

The bass-viol proceeded to the church and did the usual rehearsals, and gossiped with the sexton, to whom he confided the fact that the young missus was terrible vexed. The bells soon began to ring, and Widow Winburn's heart was glad as she listened to the full peal, and thought to herself that it was her Harry who was making so much noise in the world, and speaking to all the neighborhood. Then the peal ceased as church-time drew near, and the single bell began, and the congregation came flocking in from all sides. The farmers, letting their wives and children enter, gathered round the chief porch and compared notes in a ponderous manner on crops and markets. The laborers collected near the door by which the gallery was reached. All the men of the parish seemed to like standing about before church, though poor Walker, the curate, did not appear. He came up with the school children and the young ladies, and in due course the bell stopped and the service began. There was a very good congregation still at Englebourn; the adult generation had been bred up in times when every decent person in the parish went to church, and the custom was still strong, notwithstanding the rector's bad example. He scarcely ever came to church himself in the mornings, though his wheel-chair might be seen going up and down on the gravel before his house or on the lawn on warm days; and this was one of his daughter's greatest troubles.

The little choir of children sang admirably, led by the



schoolmistress, and Miss Winter and the curate exchanged approving glances. They performed the liveliest chant in their collection, that the opposition might have no cause to complain of their want of joyfulness. And in turn Miss Wheeler was in hopes that out of deference to her, the usual rule of selection in the gallery might have been modified. It was with no small annoyance, therefore, that, after the litany was over and the tuning finished, she heard the clerk give out that they would praise God by singing part of the ninety-first Psalm. Mary, who was on the tiptoe of expectation as to what was coming, saw the curate give a slight shrug with his shoulders and lift of his eyebrows as he left the reading-desk, and in another minute it became a painful effort for her to keep from laughing as she slyly watched her cousin's face; while the gallery sang with vigor worthy of any cause or occasion, —

“On the old lion He shall go,  
The adder fell and long;  
On the young lion tread also,  
With dragons stout and strong.”

The trebles took up the last line, and repeated, —

“With dragons stout and strong;”

and then the whole strength of the gallery chorused again,

“With dra-gons stout and strong,”

and the bass-viol seemed to her to prolong the notes and to gloat over them as he droned them out, looking triumphantly at the distant curate. Mary was thankful to kneel down to compose her face. The first trial was the severe one, and she got through the second psalm much better; and by the time Mr. Walker had plunged fairly into his sermon she was a model of propriety and sedateness again.

But it was to be a Sunday of adventures. The sermon had scarcely begun when there was a stir down by the door at the west end, and people began to look round and whisper. Presently a man came softly up and said something to the clerk; the clerk jumped up and whispered to the curate, who paused for a moment with a puzzled look, and, instead of finishing his sentence, said in a loud voice, "Farmer Grove's house is on fire!"

The curate probably anticipated the effect of his words; in a minute he was the only person left in the church except the clerk and one or two very infirm old folk. He shut up and pocketed his sermon, and followed his flock.

It proved luckily to be only Farmer Grove's chimney and not his house which was on fire. The farmhouse was only two fields from the village, and the congregation rushed across there, Harry Winburn and two or three of the most active young men and boys leading. As they entered the yard the flames were rushing out of the chimney, and any moment the thatch might take fire. Here was the real danger. A ladder had just been reared against the chimney, and, while a frightened farm-girl and a carter-boy held it at the bottom, a man was going up it carrying a bucket of water. It shook with his weight, and the top was slipping gradually along the face of the chimney, and in another moment would rest against nothing. Harry and his companions saw the danger at a glance, and shouted to the man to stand still till they could get to the ladder. They rushed towards him with the rush which men can only make under strong excitement; but the foremost of them caught a spoke with one hand, and, before he could steady it, the top slipped clear of the chimney, and ladder, man, and bucket, came heavily to the ground.

Then came a scene of bewildering confusion, as women

and children trooped into the yard — “Who was it?” “Was he dead?” “The fire was catching the thatch.” “The stables were on fire.” “Who done it?” — all sorts of cries, and all sorts of acts except the right ones. Fortunately, two or three of the men, with heads on their shoulders, soon organized a line for handing buckets; the flue was stopped below, and Harry Winburn, standing nearly at the top of the ladder, which was now safely planted, was deluging the thatch round the chimney from the buckets handed up to him. In a few minutes he was able to pour water down the chimney itself, and soon afterwards the whole affair was at an end. The farmer’s dinner was spoilt, but otherwise no damage had been done, except to the clothes of the foremost men; and the only accident was that first fall from the ladder.

The man had been carried out of the yard while the fire was still burning; so that it was hardly known who it was. Now, in answer to their inquiries, it proved to be old Simon, the rector’s gardener and head man, who had seen the fire, and sent the news to the church, while he himself went to the spot, with such result as we have seen.

The surgeon had not yet seen him. Some declared he was dead; others, that he was sitting up at home, and quite well. Little by little the crowd dispersed to Sunday’s dinners; and, when they met again before the afternoon’s service, it was ascertained that Simon was certainly not dead, but all else was still nothing more than rumor. Public opinion was much divided, some holding that it would go hard with a man of his age and heft; but the common belief seemed to be that he was of that sort “as’d take a deal o’ killin’,” and that he would be none the worse for such a fall as that.

The two young ladies had been much shocked at the

accident, and had accompanied the hurdle on which old Simon was carried to his cottage door; after afternoon service they went round by the cottage to inquire. The two girls knocked at the door, which was opened by his wife, who dropped a courtesy and smoothed down her Sunday apron when she found who were her visitors.

She seemed at first a little unwilling to let them in; but Miss Winter pressed so kindly to see her husband, and Mary made such sympathizing eyes at her, that the old woman gave in, and conducted her through the front room into that beyond, where the patient lay.

"I hope as you'll excuse it, miss, for I knows the place do smell terrible bad of baccar; only my old man he said as how —"

"Oh, never mind; we don't care at all about the smell. Poor Simon! I'm sure if it does him any good, or soothes the pain, I shall be glad to buy him some tobacco myself."

The old man was lying on the bed with his coat and boots off, and a worsted nightcap of his wife's knitting pulled on to his head. She had tried hard to get him to go to bed at once, and take some physic, and his present costume and position was the compromise. His back was turned to them as they entered, and he was evidently in pain, for he drew his breath heavily and with difficulty, and gave a sort of groan at every respiration. He did not seem to notice their entrance; so his wife touched him on the shoulder, and said, "Simon, here's the young ladies come to see how you be."

Simon turned himself round, and winced and groaned as he pulled off his nightcap in token of respect.

"We didn't like to go home without coming to see how you were, Simon. Has the doctor been?"



"Oh, yes, thank'ee, miss. He've a been and feel'd un all over, and listened at the chest on un," said his wife.

"And what did he say?"

"A zem'd to zay as there wur no bwones bruk — ugh, ugh," put in Simon, who spoke his native tongue with a buzz, imported from further west, "but a couldn't zay wether or no there warn't some infarnal injury —"

"Eternal, Simon, eternal!" interrupted his wife; "how canst use such words afore the young ladies?"

"I tell'ee, wife, as 'twur infarnal — ugh, ugh," retorted the gardener.

"Internal injury?" suggested Miss Winter. "I'm very sorry to hear it."

"Zummat inside o' me like, as wur got out o' place," explained Simon; "and I thinks a must be near about the mark, for I feels mortal bad here when I tries to move;" and he put his hand on his side. "Hows'm'ever, as there's no bwones bruk, I hopes to be about to-morrow mornin', please the Lord — ugh, ugh!"

"You mustn't think of it, Simon," said Miss Winter. "You must be quite quiet for a week, at least, till you get rid of this pain."

"So I tells un, Miss Wihter," put in the wife. "You hear what the young missus says, Simon?"

"And wut's to happen Tiny?" said the contumacious Simon, scornfully. "Her'll cast her calf, and me not by. Her's calving may be this minut. Tiny's time wur up, miss, two days back, and her's never no gurt while arter her time."

"She will do very well, I dare say," said Miss Winter. "One of the men can look after her."

The notion of any one else attending Tiny in her interesting situation seemed to excite Simon beyond bearing,

for he raised himself on one elbow, and was about to make a demonstration with his other hand, when the pain seized him again, and he sank back groaning.

"There you see, Simon, you can't move without pain. You must be quiet till you have seen the doctor again."

"There's the red spider out along the south wall — ugh, ugh," persisted Simon, without seeming to hear her; "and your new g'raniums a'most covered wi' blight. I wur a tacklin', one on 'em just afore you come in."

Following the direction indicated by his nod, the girls became aware of a plant by his bedside, which he had been fumigating; for his pipe was leaning against the flower-pot in which it stood.

"He wouldn't lie still nohow, miss," explained his wife, "till I went and fetched un in a pipe and one o' thaay plants from the greenhouse."

"It was very thoughtful of you, Simon," said Miss Winter; "you know how much I prize these new plants; but we will manage them; and you mustn't think of these things now. You have had a wonderful escape to-day for a man of your age. I hope we shall find that there is nothing much the matter with you after a few days, but you might have been killed, you know. You ought to be very thankful to God that you were not killed in that fall."

"So I be, miss, werry thankful to un — ugh, ugh; and if it plaase the Lord to spare my life till to-morrow mornin', — ugh, ugh, — we'll smoke them cussed insects."

This last retort of the incorrigible Simon on her cousin's attempt, as the rector's daughter, to improve the occasion, was too much for Miss Mary, and she slipped out of the room lest she should bring disgrace on herself by an explosion of laughter. She was joined by her cousin in

another minute, and the two walked together towards the rectory.

"I hope you were not faint, dear, with that close room, smelling of smoke?"

"Oh, dear, no; to tell you the truth, I was only afraid of laughing at your quaint old patient. What a rugged old dear it is. I hope he isn't much hurt."

"I hope not, indeed; for he is the most honest, faithful old servant in the world, but so obstinate. He never will go to church on Sunday mornings; and, when I speak to him about it, he says papa doesn't go, which is very wrong and impertinent of him."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A PROMISE OF FAIRER WEATHER.

ALL dwellers in and about London are, alas, too well acquainted with that never-to-be-enough-hated change which we have to undergo once at least in every spring. As each succeeding winter wears away, the same thing happens to us.

For some time we do not trust the fair, lengthening days, and cannot believe that the dirty pair of sparrows who live opposite our window are really making love and going to build, notwithstanding all their twittering. But morning after morning rises fresh and gentle; there is no longer any vice in the air; we drop our overcoats; we rejoice in the green shoots which the privet hedge is making in the square garden, and hail the returning tender-pointed leaves of the plane trees as friends; we go out of our way to walk through Covent Garden market to see the ever-brightening show of flowers from the happy country.

This state of things goes on sometimes for a few days only, sometimes for weeks, till we make sure that we are safe for this spring, at any rate. Don't we wish we may get it! Sooner or later, but sure—sure as Christmas bills, or the income-tax, or any thing, if there be any thing, surer than these—comes the morning when we are suddenly conscious as soon as we rise that there is something the matter. We do not feel comfortable in our clothes; nothing tastes quite as it should at breakfast; though the day looks bright enough, there is a fierce, dusty



taint about it, as we look out through windows, which no instinct now prompts us to throw open, as it has done every day for the last month.

But it is only when we open our doors and issue into the street, that the hateful reality comes right home to us. All moisture, and softness, and pleasantness has gone clean out of the air since last night; we seem to inhale yards of horsehair instead of satin; our skins dry up; our eyes, and hair, and whiskers, and clothes are soon filled with loathsome dust, and our nostrils with the reek of the great city. We glance at the weathercock on the nearest steeple and see that it points N.E. And so long as the change lasts we carry about with us a feeling of anger and impatience as though we personally were being ill-treated. We could have borne with it well enough in November; it would have been natural, and all in the day's work, in March; but now, when Rottenrow is beginning to be crowded, when long lines of pleasure-vans are leaving town on Monday mornings for Hampton Court, or the poor remains of dear Epping Forest, when the exhibitions are open or about to open, when the religious public is up, or on its way up, for May meetings, when the Thames is already sending up faint warnings of what we may expect, as soon as his dirty old life's blood shall have been thoroughly warmed up, and the Ship, and Trafalgar, and Star and Garter are in full swing at the antagonist poles of the cockney system, we do feel that this blight which has come over us and every thing is an insult, and that while it lasts, as there is nobody who can be made particularly responsible for it, we are justified in going about in general disgust, and ready to quarrel with anybody we may meet on the smallest pretext.

This sort of east-windy state is perhaps the best physical analogy for that mental one in which our hero now

found himself. The real crisis was over; he had managed to pass through the eye of the storm, and drift for the present at least into the skirts of it, where he lay rolling under bare poles, comparatively safe, but without any power as yet, to get the ship well in hand, and make her obey her helm. The storm might break over him again at any minute, and would find him almost as helpless as ever.

For he could not follow Drysdale's advice at once, and break off his visits to "The Choughs" altogether. He went back again after a day or two, but only for short visits; he never stayed behind now after the other men left the bar, and avoided interviews with Patty alone as diligently as he had sought them before. She was puzzled at his change of manner, and, not being able to account for it, was piqued, and ready to revenge herself and pay him out in the hundred little ways which the least practised of her sex know how to employ for the discipline of any of the inferior or trousered half of the creation. If she had been really in love with him, it would have been a different matter; but she was not. In the last six weeks she had certainly often had visions of the pleasures of being a lady and keeping servants, and riding in a carriage like the squires' and rectors' wives and daughters about her home. She had a liking, even a sentiment for him, which might very well have grown into something dangerous before long; but as yet it was not more than skin deep. Of late, indeed, she had been much more frightened than attracted by the conduct of her admirer, and really felt it a relief, notwithstanding her pique, when he retired into the elder-brother sort of state. But she would have been more than woman if she had not resented the change; and so, very soon, the pangs of jealousy were added to his other troubles. Other men were beginning

to frequent "The Choughs" regularly. Drysdale, besides dividing with Tom the prestige of being an original discoverer, was by far the largest customer. St. Cloud came, and brought Chanter with him, to whom Patty was actually civil, not because she liked him at all, but because she saw that it made Tom furious. Though he could not fix on any one man in particular, he felt that mankind in general were gaining on him. In his better moments indeed he often wished that she would take the matter into her own hands and throw him over for good and all; but keep away from the place altogether he could not, and often, when he fancied himself on the point of doing it, a pretty toss of her head, or kind look of her eyes, would scatter all his good resolutions to the four winds.

And so the days dragged on, and he dragged on through them; hot fits of conceit alternating in him with cold fits of despondency and mawkishness and discontent with every thing and everybody, which were all the more intolerable from their entire strangeness. Instead of seeing the bright side of all things, he seemed to be looking at creation through yellow spectacles, and saw faults and blemishes in all his acquaintance which had been till now invisible.

But, the more he was inclined to depreciate all other men, the more he felt that there was one to whom he had been grossly unjust. And, as he recalled all that had passed, he began to do justice to the man who had not flinched from warning him and braving him, who he felt had been watching over him, and trying to guide him straight when he had lost all power or will to keep straight himself.

From this time the dread increased on him, lest any of the other men should find out his quarrel with Hardy. Their utter ignorance of it encouraged him in the hope that it might all pass off like a bad dream. While it re-

maintained a matter between them alone, he felt that all might come straight, though he could not think how. He began to loiter by the entrance of the passage which led to Hardy's rooms; sometimes he would find something to say to his scout or bedmaker which took him into the back regions outside Hardy's window, glancing at it sideways as he stood giving his orders. There it was, wide open, generally—he hardly knew whether he hoped to catch a glimpse of the owner, but he did hope that Hardy might hear his voice. He watched him in chapel and hall fur-tively, but constantly, and was always fancying what he was doing and thinking about. Was it as painful an effort to Hardy, he wondered, as to him to go on speaking, as if nothing had happened, when they met at the boats, as they did now again almost daily (for Diogenes was bent on training some of the torpids for next year), and yet never to look one another in the face; to live together as usual during part of every day, and yet to feel all the time that a great wall had arisen between them, more hopelessly dividing them for the time, than thousands of miles of ocean or continent?

Amongst other distractions which Tom tried at this crisis of his life, was reading. For three or four days running he really worked hard,—very hard, if we were to reckon by the number of hours he spent in his own rooms over his books with his oak sported,—hard, even though we should only reckon by results. For, though scarcely an hour passed that he was not balancing on the hind legs of his chair with a vacant look in his eyes, and thinking of any thing but Greek roots or Latin constructions, yet on the whole he managed to get through a good deal, and one evening, for the first time since his quarrel with Hardy, felt a sensation of real comfort—it hardly amounted to pleasure—as he closed his Sophocles some



hour or so after hall, having just finished the last of the Greek plays which he meant to take in for his first examination. He leaned back in his chair and sat for a few minutes, letting his thoughts follow their own bent. They soon took to going wrong, and he jumped up in fear lest he should be drifting back into the black, stormy sea in the trough of which he had been laboring so lately, and which he felt he was by no means clear of yet. At first he caught up his cap and gown as though he were going out. There was a wine party at one of his acquaintance' rooms; or he could go and smoke a cigar in the pool room, or at any one of a dozen other places. On second thoughts, however, he threw his academicals back on to the sofa, and went to his bookcase. The reading had paid so well that evening that he resolved to go on with it. He had no particular object in selecting one book more than another, and so took down carelessly the first that came to hand.

It happened to be a volume of Plato, and opened of its own accord in the *Apology*. He glanced at a few lines. What a flood of memories they called up! This was almost the last book he had read at school; and teacher, and friends, and lofty oak-shelved library, stood out before him at once. Then the blunders that he himself and others had made rushed through his mind, and he almost burst into a laugh as he wheeled his chair round to the window, and began reading where he had opened, encouraging every thought of the old times when he first read that marvellous defence, and throwing himself back into them with all his might. And still, as he read, forgotten words of wise comment, and strange thoughts of wonder and longing, came back to him. The great truth which he had been led to the brink of in those early days rose in all its awe and all its attractiveness before him. He leant back in his chair, and gave himself up to his

thought; and how strangely that thought bore on the struggle which had been raging in him of late; how an answer seemed to be trembling to come out of it to all the cries, now defiant, now plaintive, which had gone up out of his heart in this time of trouble! For his thought was of that spirit, distinct from himself, and yet communing with his inmost soul, always dwelling in him, knowing him better than he knew himself, never misleading him, always leading him to light and truth, of which the old philosopher spoke. "The old heathen, Socrates, did actually believe that — there can be no question about it;" he thought. "Has not the testimony of the best men through these two thousand years borne witness that he was right — that he did not believe a lie? That was what we were told. Surely, I don't mistake! Were we not told, too, or did I dream it, that what was true for him is true for every man — for me? That there is a spirit dwelling in me, striving with me, ready to lead me into all truth if I will submit to his guidance?"

"Ay! submit, submit, there's the rub! Give yourself up to his guidance! Throw up the reins, and say, you've made a mess of it. Well, why not? Haven't I made a mess of it? Am I fit to hold the reins?"

"Not I," he got up and began walking about his rooms, "I give it up."

"Give it up!" he went on, presently; "yes, but to whom? Not to the demon, spirit, whatever it was, who took up his abode in the old Athenian — at least so he said, and so I believe. No, no! Two thousand years and all that they have seen have not passed over the world to leave us just where he was left. We want no demons or spirits. And yet the old heathen was guided right, and what can a man want more? and who ever wanted guidance more than I now — here — in this room — at this

minute? I give up the reins; who will take them?" And so there came on him one of those seasons when a man's thoughts cannot be followed in words. A sense of awe came on him, and over him, and wrapped him round; awe at a presence of which he was becoming suddenly conscious, into which he seemed to have wandered, and yet which he felt must have been there, around him, in his own heart and soul, though he knew it not. There was hope and longing in his heart mingling with the fear of that presence, but withal the old reckless and daring feeling which he knew so well, still bubbling up untamed, untamable it seemed to him.

The room stifled him now; so he threw on his cap and gown, and hurried down into the quadrangle. It was very quiet; probably there were not a dozen men in college. He walked across to the low, dark entrance of the passage which led to Hardy's rooms, and there paused. Was he there by chance, or was he guided there? Yes, this was the right way for him, he had no doubt now as to that; down the dark passage, and into the room he knew so well—and what then? He took a short turn or two before the entrance. How could he be sure that Hardy was alone? And, if not, to go in would be worse than useless. If he were alone, what should he say? After all, *must* he go in there? was there no way but that?

The college clock struck a quarter to seven. It was his usual time for "The Choughs;" the house would be quiet now; was there not one looking out for him there who would be grieved if he did not come? After all, might not that be his way, for this night at least? He might bring pleasure to one human being by going there at once. That he knew; what else could he be sure of?

At this moment he heard Hardy's door open, and a

voice saying, "Good-night," and the next Grey came out of the passage, and was passing close to him.

"Join yourself to him." The impulse came so strongly into Tom's mind this time, that it was like a voice speaking to him. He yielded to it, and, stepping to Grey's side, wished him good-evening. The other returned his salute in his shy way, and was hurrying on, but Tom kept by him.

"Have you been reading with Hardy?"

"Yes."

"How is he? I have not seen any thing of him for some time."

"Oh, very well, I think," said Grey, glancing sideways at his questioner, and adding, after a moment, "I have wondered rather not to see you there of late."

"Are you going to your school?" said Tom, breaking away from the subject.

"Yes, and I am rather late; I must make haste on; good-night."

"Will you let me go with you to-night? It would be a real kindness. Indeed," he added, as he saw how embarrassing his proposal was to Grey, "I will do whatever you tell me — you don't know how grateful I shall be to you. Do let me go — just for to-night. Try me once."

Grey hesitated, turned his head sharply once or twice as they walked on together, and then said, with something like a sigh —

"I don't know, I'm sure. Did you ever teach in a night-school?"

"No, but I have taught in the Sunday-school at home sometimes. Indeed, I will do whatever you tell me."

"Oh! but this is not at all like a Sunday-school. They are a very rough, wild lot."



"The rougher the better," said Tom; "I shall know how to manage them then."

"But you must not really be rough with them."

"No, I wont; I didn't mean that," said Tom, hastily, for he saw his mistake at once. "I shall take it as a great favor, if you will let me go to-night. You wont repent it, I'm sure."

Grey did not seem at all sure of this, but saw no means of getting rid of his companion, and so they walked on together and turned down a long, narrow court in the lowest part of the town. At the doors of the houses laboring men, mostly Irish, lounged or stood about, smoking and talking to one another, or to the women who leant out of the windows, or passed to and fro on their various errands of business or pleasure. A group of half-grown lads were playing at pitch-farthing at the further end, and all over the court were scattered children of all ages, ragged and noisy little creatures most of them, on whom paternal and maternal admonitions and cuffs were constantly being expended, and, to all appearances, in vain.

At the sight of Grey a shout arose amongst the smaller boys, of "Here's the teacher!" and they crowded round him and Tom as they went up the court. Several of the men gave him a half-surly, half-respectful nod, as he passed along, wishing them good-evening. The rest merely stared at him and his companion. They stopped at a door which Grey opened, and led the way into the passage of an old tumble-down cottage, on the ground-floor of which were two low rooms which served for the schoolrooms.

A hard-featured, middle-aged woman, who kept the house, was waiting, and said to Grey, "Mr. Jones told me to say, sir, he would not be here to-night, as he has got a bad fever case — so you was to take only the lower classes

sir, he said ; and the policeman would be near to keep out the big boys, if you wanted him ; shall I go and tell him to step round, sir ? ”

Grey looked embarrassed for a moment, and then said, “ No, never mind, you can go ; ” and then turning to Tom, added, “ Jones is the curate ; he wont be here to-night ; and some of the bigger boys are very noisy and troublesome, and only come to make a noise. However, if they come, we must do our best.”

Meantime, the crowd of small ragged urchins had filled the room, and were swarming on to the benches and squabbling for the copy-books which were laid out on the thin desks. Grey set to work to get them into order, and soon the smallest were draughted off into the inner room with slates and spelling-books, and the bigger ones, some dozen in number, settled to their writing. Tom seconded him so readily, and seemed so much at home, that Grey felt quite relieved.

“ You seem to get on capitally,” he said ; “ I will go into the inner room to the little ones, and you stay and take these. There are the class-books when they have done their copies,” and so went off into the inner room and closed the door.

My readers must account for the fact as they please ; I only state that Tom, as he bent over one after another of the pupils, and guided the small, grubby hands, which clutched the inky pens with cramped fingers, and went spluttering and blotching along the lines of the copy-books, felt the yellow scales dropping from his eyes, and more warmth coming back into his heart than he had known there for many a day.

All went on well inside, notwithstanding a few small outbreaks between the scholars, but every now and then mud was thrown against the window, and noises outside

and in the passage threatened some interruption. At last, when the writing was finished, the copy-books cleared away, and the class-books distributed, the door opened, and two or three big boys of fifteen or sixteen lounged in, with their hands in their pockets and their caps on. There was an insolent look about them which set Tom's back up at once; however, he kept his temper, made them take their caps off, and, as they said they wanted to read with the rest, let them take their places on the benches.

But now came the tug of war. He could not keep his eyes on the whole lot at once, and, no sooner did he fix his attention on the stammering reader for the time being and try to help him, than anarchy broke out all round him. Small stones and shot were thrown about, and cries arose from the smaller fry, "Please, sir, he's been and poured some ink down my back," "He's stole my book, sir," "He's gone and stuck a pin in my leg." The evil-doers were so cunning that it was impossible to catch them; but, as he was hastily turning in his own mind what to do, a cry arose, and one of the benches went suddenly over backwards on to the floor, carrying with it its whole freight of boys, except two of the bigger ones, who were the evident authors of the mishap.

Tom sprang at the one nearest him, seized him by the collar, hauled him into the passage, and sent him out of the street-door with a sound kick; and then, rushing back, caught hold of the second, who went down on his back and clung round Tom's legs, shouting for help to his remaining companions, and struggling and swearing. It was all the work of a moment, and now the door opened, and Grey appeared from the inner room. Tom left off hauling his prize towards the passage, and felt and looked very foolish.

"This fellow, and another whom I have turned out, up-

set that form with all the little boys on it," he said, apologetically.

"It's a lie; 'twasn't me," roared the captive, to whom Tom administered a sound box on the ear, while the small boys, rubbing different parts of their bodies, chorused, "'Twas him, teacher, 'twas him," and heaped further charges of pinching, pin-sticking, and other atrocities on him.

Grey astonished Tom by his firmness. "Don't strike him again," he said. "Now, go out at once, or I will send for your father." The fellow got up, and, after standing a moment and considering his chance of successful resistance to physical force in the person of Tom, and moral in that of Grey, slunk out. "You must go too, Murphy," went on Grey to another of the intruders.

"O your honor, let me bide. I'll be as quiet as a mouse," pleaded the Irish boy; and Tom would have given in, but Grey was unyielding.

"You were turned out last week, and Mr. Jones said you were not to come back for a fortnight."

"Well, good-night to your honor," said Murphy, and took himself off.

"The rest may stop," said Grey. "You had better take the inner room now; I will stay here."

"I'm very sorry," said Tom.

"You couldn't help it; no one can manage those two. Murphy is quite different, but I should have spoiled him if I had let him stay now."

The remaining half-hour passed off quietly. Tom retired into the inner room, and took up Grey's lesson, which he had been reading to the boys from a large Bible with pictures. Out of consideration for their natural and acquired restlessness, the little fellows, who were all between eight and eleven years old, were only kept sitting at their



pot-hooks and spelling for the first hour, and then were allowed to crowd round the teacher, who read and talked to them, and showed them the pictures. Tom found the Bible open at the story of the prodigal son, and read it out to them as they clustered round his knees. Some of the outside ones fidgeted about a little, but those close round him listened with ears, and eyes, and bated breath; and two little blue-eyed boys without shoes — their ragged clothes concealed by long pinafores which their widowed mother had put on clean to send them to school in — leaned against him and looked up in his face, and his heart warmed to the touch and the look. "Please, teacher, read it again," they said, when he finished; so he read it again, and sighed when Grey came in and lighted a candle (for the room was getting dark), and said it was time for prayers.

A few collects, and the Lord's Prayer, in which all the young voices joined, drowning for a minute the noises from the court outside, finished the evening's schooling. The children trooped out, and Grey went to speak to the woman who kept the house. Tom, left to himself, felt strangely happy, and, for something to do, took the snuffers and commenced a crusade against a large family of bugs, who, taking advantage of the quiet, came cruising out of a crack in the otherwise neatly papered wall. Some dozen had fallen on his spear when Grey re-appeared, and was much horrified at the sight. He called the woman, and told her to have the hole carefully fumigated and mended.

"I thought we had killed them all long ago," he said; "but the place is tumbling down."

"It looks well enough," said Tom.

"Yes, we have it kept as tidy as possible. It ought to be, at least, a little better than what the children see at

home." And so they left the school and court, and walked up to college.

"Where are you going?" Tom said, as they entered the gate.

"To Hardy's rooms; will you come?"

"No, not to-night," said Tom. "I know that you want to be reading; I should only interrupt."

"Well, good-night, then," said Grey, and went on, leaving Tom standing in the porch. On the way up from the school he had almost made up his mind to go to Hardy's rooms that night. He longed, and yet feared to do so; and, on the whole, was not sorry for an excuse. Their first meeting must be alone, and it would be a very embarrassing one for him, at any rate. Grey, he hoped, would tell Hardy of his visit to the school, and that would show that he was coming round, and make the meeting easier. His talk with Grey, too, had removed one great cause of uneasiness from his mind. It was now quite clear that he had no suspicion of the quarrel, and, if Hardy had not told him, no one else could know of it.

Altogether he strolled into the quadrangle a happier and sounder man than he had been since his first visit to the Choughs, and looked up and answered with his old look and voice when he heard his name called from one of the first-floor windows.

The hailer was Drysdale, who was leaning out in lounging coat and velvet cap, and enjoying a cigar as usual, in the midst of the flowers of his hanging garden.

"You've heard the good news, I suppose?"

"No; what do you mean?"

"Why, Blake has got the Latin verse."

"Hurrah! I'm so glad."

"Come up and have a weed." Tom ran up the stair-

case and into Drysdale's rooms, and was leaning out of the window at his side in another minute.

"What does he get by it?" he said; "do you know?"

"No; some books bound in Russia, I dare say, with the Oxford arms, and 'Dominus illuminatio mea' on the back."

"No money?"

"Not much — perhaps a ten'ner," answered Drysdale, "but no end of *κῦδος*, I suppose."

"It makes it look well for his first, don't you think? But I wish he had got some money for it. I often feel very uncomfortable about that bill; don't you?"

"Not I; what's the good? It's nothing when you are used to it. Besides, it don't fall due for another month."

"But if Blake can't meet it then?" said Tom.

"Well, it will be vacation, and I'll trouble greasy Benjamin to catch me then."

"But you don't mean to say you wont pay it?" said Tom, in horror.

"Pay it! You may trust Benjamin for that. He'll pull round his little usuries somehow."

"Only we have promised to pay on a certain day, you know."

"Oh, of course, that's the form. That only means that he can't pinch us sooner."

"I do hope, though, Drysdale, that it will be paid on the day," said Tom, who could not quite swallow the notion of forfeiting his word, even though it were only a promise to pay to a scoundrel.

"All right. You've nothing to do with it, remember. He wont bother you. Besides, you can plead infancy, if the worst comes to the worst. There's such a queer old bird gone to your friend Hardy's rooms."

The mention of Hardy broke the disagreeable train of

thought into which Tom was falling, and he listened eagerly as Drysdale went on.

"It was about half an hour ago. I was looking out here, and saw an old fellow come hobbling into quad on two sticks, in a shady blue uniform coat and white trousers. The kind of old boy you read about in books, you know; Commodore Trunnion, or Uncle Toby, or one of that sort. Well, I watched him backing and filing about the quad, and trying one staircase and another; but there was nobody about. So down I trotted, and went up to him for fun, and to see what he was after. It was as good as a play, if you could have seen it. I was ass enough to take off my cap and make a low bow as I came up to him, and he pulled off his uniform cap in return, and we stood there bowing to one another. He was a thorough old gentleman, and I felt rather foolish for fear he should see that I expected a lark when I came out. But I don't think he had an idea of it, and only set my capping him down to the wonderful good manners of the college. So we got quite thick, and I piloted him across to Hardy's staircase in the back quad. I wanted him to come up and quench, but he declined, with many apologies. I'm sure he is a character."

"He must be Hardy's father," said Tom.

"I shouldn't wonder. But is his father in the navy?"

"He is a retired captain."

"Then no doubt you're right. What shall we do? Have a hand at picquet? Some men will be here directly. Only for love."

Tom declined the proffered game, and went off soon after to his own rooms, a happier man than he had been since his first night at the Choughs.



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE RECONCILIATION.

TOM rose in the morning with a presentiment that all would be over now before long, and, to make his presentiment come true, resolved, before night, to go himself to Hardy and give in. All he reserved to himself was the liberty to do it in the manner which would be least painful to himself. He was greatly annoyed, therefore, when Hardy did not appear at morning chapel ; for he had fixed on the leaving chapel as the least unpleasant time in which to begin his confession, and was going to catch Hardy then, and follow him to his rooms. All the morning, too, in answer to his inquiries by his scout Wiggins, Hardy's scout replied that his master was out, or busy. He did not come to the boats, he did not appear in hall ; so that, after hall, when Tom went back to his own rooms, as he did at once, instead of sauntering out of college, or going to a wine party, he was quite out of heart at his bad luck, and began to be afraid that he would have to sleep on his unhealed wound another night.

He sat down in an arm-chair, and fell to musing, and thought how wonderfully his life had been changed in these few short weeks. He could hardly get back across the gulf which separated him from the self who came back into those rooms after Easter, full of anticipations of the pleasures and delights of the coming summer term and vacation. To his own surprise he didn't seem much to

regret the loss of his *châteaux en Espagne*, and felt a sort of grim satisfaction in their utter overthrow.

While occupied with these thoughts, he heard talking on his stairs, accompanied by a strange lumbering tread. These came nearer; and at last stopped just outside his door, which opened in another moment, and Wiggins announced, —

“Captaining Hardy, sir.”

Tom jumped to his legs, and felt himself color painfully. “Here, Wiggins,” said he, “wheel round that arm-chair for Captain Hardy. I am so very glad to see you, sir,” and he hastened round himself to meet the old gentleman, holding out his hand, which the visitor took very cordially, as soon as he had passed his heavy stick to his left hand, and balanced himself safely upon it.

“Thank you, sir; thank you,” said the old man after a few moments’ pause, “I find your companion ladders rather steep;” and then he sat down with some difficulty.

Tom took the captain’s stick and undress cap, and put them reverentially on his sideboard; and then, to get rid of some little nervousness which he couldn’t help feeling, bustled to his cupboard, and helped Wiggins to place glasses and biscuits on the table. “Now, sir, what will you take? I have port, sherry, and whiskey here, and can get you any thing else. Wiggins, run to Hinton’s and get some dessert.”

“No dessert, thank you, for me,” said the captain; “I’ll take a cup of coffee, or a glass of grog, or any thing you have ready. Don’t open wine for me, pray, sir.”

“Oh, it is all the better for being opened,” said Tom, working away at a bottle of sherry with his corkscrew — “and, Wiggins, get some coffee and anchovy toast in a quarter of an hour; and just put out some tumblers and toddy ladles, and bring up boiling water with the coffee.”

While making his hospitable preparations, Tom managed to get many side-glances at the old man, who sat looking steadily and abstractedly before him into the fireplace, and was much struck and touched by the picture. The sailor wore a well-preserved old undress uniform coat and waistcoat, and white drill trousers; he was a man of middle height, but gaunt and massive, and Tom recognized the framework of the long arms and grand shoulders and chest which he had so often admired in the son. His right leg was quite stiff from an old wound on the kneecap; the left eye was sightless, and the scar of a cutlass travelled down the drooping lid and on to the weather-beaten cheek below. His head was high and broad, his hair and whiskers silver white, while the shaggy eyebrows were scarcely grizzled. His face was deeply lined, and the long, clean-cut lower jaw, and drawn look about the mouth, gave a grim expression to the face at the first glance, which wore off as you looked, leaving, however, on most men who thought about it, the impression which fastened on our hero, "An awkward man to have met at the head of boarders towards the end of the great war."

In a minute or two Tom, having completed his duties, faced the old sailor, much re-assured by his covert inspection; and, pouring himself out a glass of sherry, pushed the decanter across, and drank to his guest.

"Your health, sir," he said, "and thank you very much for coming up to see me."

"Thank *you*, sir," said the captain, rousing himself and filling, "I drink to you, sir. The fact is, I took a great liberty in coming up to your rooms in this off-hand way, without calling or sending up, but you'll excuse it in an old sailor." Here the captain took to his glass, and seemed a little embarrassed. Tom felt embarrassed also, feeling that something was coming, and could only think of

asking how the captain liked the sherry. The captain liked the sherry very much. Then, suddenly clearing his throat, he went on. "I felt, sir, that you would excuse me, for I have a favor to ask of you." He paused again, while Tom muttered something about great pleasure, and then went on.

"You know my son, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, sir; he has been my best friend up here; I owe more to him than to any man in Oxford."

The captain's eye gleamed with pleasure as he replied, "Jack is a noble fellow, Mr. Brown, though I say it, who am his father. I've often promised myself a cruize to Oxford since he has been here. I came here, at last, yesterday, and have been having a long yarn with him. I found there was something on his mind. He can't keep any thing from his old father: and so I drew out of him that he loves you as David loved Jonathan. He made my old eye very dim while he was talking of you, Mr. Brown. And then I found that you two are not as you used to be. Some coldness sprung up between you; but what about, I couldn't get at! Young men are often hasty—I know I was, forty years ago—Jack says he has been hasty with you. Now, that boy is all that I have in the world, Mr. Brown. I know my boy's friend will like to send an old man home with a light heart. So I made up my mind to come over to you, and ask you to make it up with Jack. I gave him the slip after dinner and here I am."

"O sir, did he really ask you to come to me?"

"No, sir," said the captain, "he did not—I'm sorry for it—I think Jack must be in the wrong, for he said he had been too hasty, and yet he wouldn't ask me to come to you and make it up. But he is young, sir; young and proud. He said he couldn't move in it, his mind was



made up; he was wretched enough over it, but the move must come from you. And so that's the favor I have to ask, that you will make it up with Jack. It isn't often a young man can do such a favor to an old one—to an old father with one son. You'll not feel the worse for having done it, if it's ever so hard to do, when you come to be my age." And the old man looked wistfully across the table, the muscles about his mouth quivering as he ended.

Tom sprang from his chair, and grasped the old sailor's hand, as he felt the load pass out of his heart. "Favor, sir!" he said, "I have been a mad fool enough already in this business—I should have been a double-dyed scoundrel, like enough, by this time, but for your son, and I've quarrelled with him for stopping me at the pit's mouth. Favor! If God will, I'll prove somehow where the favor lies, and what I owe to him; and to you, sir, for coming to me to-night. Stop here two minutes, sir, and I'll run down and bring him over."

Tom tore away to Hardy's door and knocked. There was no pausing in the passage now. "Come in." He opened the door, but did not enter, and for a moment or two could not speak. The rush of associations which the sight of the well-known old rickety furniture, and the figure which was seated, book in hand, with its back to the door and its feet up against one side of the mantel-piece, called up, choked him.

"*May* I come in?" he said, at last.

He saw the figure give a start, and the book trembled a little, but then came the answer, slow but firm—

"I have not changed my opinion."

"No, dear old boy, but I have," and Tom rushed across to his friend, dearer than ever to him now, and threw his arm round his neck; and, if the un-English truth must

out, had three parts of a mind to kiss the rough face which was now working with strong emotion.

"Thank God!" said Hardy, as he grasped the hand which hung over his shoulder.

"And, now, come over to my rooms; your father is there waiting for us."

"What, the dear old governor? That's what he has been after, is it? I couldn't think where he could have hove to, as he would say."

Hardy put on his cap, and the two hurried back to Tom's rooms, the lightest hearts in the university of Oxford.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CAPTAIN HARDY ENTERTAINED BY ST. AMBROSE.

THERE are moments in the life of the most self-contained and sober of us all, when we fairly bubble over, like a full bottle of champagne with the cork out; and this was one of them for our hero, who, however, be it remarked, was neither self-contained nor sober by nature. When they got back to his rooms, he really hardly knew what to do to give vent to his lightness of heart; and Hardy, though self-contained and sober enough in general, was on this occasion almost as bad as his friend. They rattled on, talking out the thing which came uppermost, whatever the subject might chance to be; but, whether grave or gay, it always ended after a minute or two in jokes not always good, and chaff, and laughter. The poor captain was a little puzzled at first, and made one or two endeavors to turn the talk into improving channels. But very soon he saw that Jack was thoroughly happy, and that was always enough for him. So he listened to one and the other, joining cheerily in the laugh whenever he could; and, when he couldn't catch the joke, looking like a benevolent old lion, and making as much belief that he *had* understood it all, as the simplicity and truthfulness of his character would allow.

The spirits of the two friends seemed inexhaustible. They lasted out the bottle of sherry which Tom had uncorked, and the remains of a bottle of his famous port. He had tried hard to be allowed to open a fresh bottle, but

the captain had made such a point of his not doing so, that he had given in for hospitality's sake. They lasted out the coffee and anchovy toast; after which the captain made a little effort at moving, which was supplicatingly stopped by Tom.

"Oh, pray, don't go, Captain Hardy. I haven't been so happy for months. Besides, I must brew you a glass of grog. I pride myself on my brew. Your son, there, will tell you that I am a dead hand at it. Here, Wiggins, a lemon!" shouted Tom.

"Well, for once in a way, I suppose. Eh, Jack?" said the captain, looking at his son.

"Oh, yes, father. You mayn't know it Brown, but, if there is one thing harder to do than another, it is to get an old sailor like my father to take a glass of grog at night."

The captain laughed a little laugh, and shook his thick stick at his son who went on.

"And as for asking him to take a pipe with it —"

"Dear me," said Tom, "I quite forgot. I really beg your pardon, Captain Hardy;" and he put down the lemon he was squeezing, and produced a box of cigars.

"It's all Jack's nonsense, sir," said the captain, holding out his hand, nevertheless, for the box.

"Now, father, don't be absurd," interrupted Hardy, snatching the box away from him. "You might as well give him a glass of absinthe. He is churchwarden at home, and can't smoke any thing but a long clay."

"I'm very sorry I haven't one here, but I can send out in a minute." And Tom was making for the door to shout for Wiggins.

"No, don't call. I'll fetch some from my rooms."

When Hardy left the room, Tom squeezed away at his lemon, and was preparing himself for a speech to Captain



Hardy full of confession and gratitude. But the captain was before him, and led the conversation into a most unexpected channel.

"I suppose, now, Mr. Brown," he began, "you don't find any difficulty in construing your Thucydides?"

"Indeed I do, sir," said Tom, laughing. "I find him a very tough old customer, except in the simplest narrative."

"For my part," said the captain, "I can't get on at all, I find, without a translation. But you see, sir, I had none of the advantages which young men have up here. In fact, Mr. Brown, I didn't begin Greek till Jack was nearly ten years old." The captain in his secret heart was prouder of his partial victory over the Greek tongue in his old age, than of his undisputed triumphs over the French in his youth, and was not averse to talking of it.

"I wonder that you ever began it at all, sir," said Tom.

"You wouldn't wonder if you knew how an uneducated man like me feels, when he comes to a place like Oxford."

"Uneducated, sir!" said Tom. "Why your education has been worth twice as much, I'm sure, as any we get here."

"No, sir; we never learnt any thing in the navy when I was a youngster, except a little rule-of-thumb mathematics. One picked up a sort of smattering of a language or two knocking about the world, but no grammatical knowledge, nothing scientific. If a boy doesn't get a method, he is beating to windward in a crank craft all his life. He hasn't got any regular place to stow away what he gets into his brains, and so it lies tumbling about in the hold, and he loses it, or it gets damaged and is never ready for use. You see what I mean, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, sir. But I'm afraid we don't all of us get much method up here. Do you really enjoy reading Thucydides now, Captain Hardy?"

"Indeed I do, sir, very much," said the captain. "There's a great deal in his history to interest an old sailor, you know. I dare say, now, that I enjoy those parts about the sea-fights more than you do." The captain looked at Tom as if he had made an audacious remark.

"I am sure you do, sir," said Tom, smiling.

"Because you see, Mr. Brown," said the captain, "when one has been in that sort of thing one's self, one likes to read how people in other times managed, and to think what one would have done in their place. I don't believe that the Greeks just at that time were very resolute fighters, though. Nelson or Collingwood would have finished that war in a year or two."

"Not with triremes, do you think, sir?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir, with any vessels which were to be had," said the captain. "But you are right about triremes. It has always been a great puzzle to me how those triremes could have been worked. How do you understand the three banks of oars, Mr. Brown?"

"Well, sir, I suppose they must have been one above the other somehow."

"But the upper bank must have had oars twenty feet long and more in that case," said the captain. "You must allow for leverage, you see."

"Of course, sir. When one comes to think of it, it isn't easy to see how they were manned and worked," said Tom.

"Now my notion about triremes—" began the captain, holding the head of his stick with both hands, and looking across at Tom.

"Why, father!" cried Hardy, returning at the moment with the pipes, and catching the captain's last word, "on one of your hobby horses already! You're not safe!—I

can't leave you for two minutes. Here's a long pipe for you. How in the world did he get on triremes?"

"I hardly know," said Tom, "but I want to hear what Captain Hardy thinks about them. You were saying, sir, that the upper oars must have been twenty feet long at least."

"My notion is—" said the captain, taking the pipe and tobacco-pouch from his son's hand.

"Stop one moment," said Hardy; "I found Blake at my rooms, and asked him to come over here. You don't object?"

"Object, my dear fellow! I'm much obliged to you. Now, Hardy, would you like to have any one else? I can send in a minute."

"No one, thank you."

"You won't stand on ceremony now, will you, with me?" said Tom.

"You see I haven't."

"And you never will again?"

"No, never. Now, father, you can heave ahead about those oars."

The captain went on charging his pipe, and proceeded: "You see, Mr. Brown, they must have been at least twenty feet long, because, if you allow the lowest bank of oars to have been three feet above the water-line, which even Jack thinks they must have been —"

"Certainly. That height at least to do any good," said Hardy.

"Not that I think Jack's opinion worth much on the point," went on his father.

"It's very ungrateful of you, then, to say so, father," said Hardy, "after all the time I've wasted trying to make it all clear to you?"

"I don't say that Jack's is not a good opinion on most

things, Mr. Brown," said the captain; "but he is all at sea about triremes. He believes that the men of the uppermost bank rowed somehow like lightermen on the Thames, walking up and down."

"I object to your statement of my faith, father," said Hardy.

"Now you know, Jack, you have said so, often."

"I have said they must have stood up to row, and so —"

"You would have had awful confusion, Jack. You must have order between decks when you're going into action. Besides, the rowers had cushions."

"That old heresy of yours again."

"Well, but Jack, they *had* cushions. Didn't the rowers who were marched across the Isthmus to man the ships which were to surprise the Piræus, carry their oars, thongs, and cushions?"

"If they did, your conclusion doesn't follow, father, that they sat on them to row."

"You hear, Mr. Brown," said the captain; "he admits my point about the cushions."

"O father, I hope you used to fight the French more fairly," said Hardy.

"But, didn't he? Didn't Jack admit my point?"

"Implicitly, sir, I think," said Tom, catching Hardy's eye, which was dancing with fun.

"Of course he did. You hear that, Jack. Now my notion about triremes —"

A knock at the door interrupted the captain again, and Blake came in and was introduced.

"Mr. Blake is almost our best scholar, father; you should appeal to him about the cushions."

"I am very proud to make your acquaintance, sir," said the captain; "I have heard my son speak of you often."



"We were talking about triremes," said Tom; "Captain Hardy thinks the oars must have been twenty feet long."

"Not easy to come forward well with that sort of oar," said Blake; "they must have pulled a slow stroke."

"Our torpid would have bumped the best of them," said Hardy.

"I don't think they could have made more than six knots," said the captain; "but yet they used to sink one another, and a light boat going only six knots couldn't break another in two amidships. It's a puzzling subject, Mr. Blake."

"It is, sir," said Blake; "if we only had some of the fo'castle songs we should know more about it. I'm afraid they had no Dibdin."

"I wish you would turn one of my father's favorite songs into anapæsts for him," said Hardy.

"What are they?" said Blake.

"'Tom Bowling,' or 'The wind that blows, and the ship that goes, and the lass that loves a sailor.'"

"By the way, why shouldn't we have a song?" said Tom. "What do you say, Captain Hardy?"

The captain winced a little as he saw his chance of expounding his notion as to triremes slipping away, but answered, —

"By all means, sir; Jack must sing for me, though. Did you ever hear him sing 'Tom Bowling'?"

"No, never, sir. Why, Hardy, you never told me you could sing."

"You never asked me," said Hardy, laughing; "but, if I sing for my father, he must spin us a yarn."

"Oh, yes; will you, sir?"

"I'll do my best, Mr. Brown; but I don't know that you'll care to listen to my old yarns. Jack thinks every-

body must like them as well as he, who used to hear them when he was a child."

"Thank you, sir; that's famous, — now Hardy, strike up."

"After you. You must set the example in your own rooms."

So Tom sang his song. And the noise brought Drysdale and another man up, who were loitering in quad on the lookout for something to do. Drysdale and the captain recognized one another, and were friends at once. And then Hardy sang "Tom Bowling," in a style which astonished the rest not a little, and as usual nearly made his father cry; and Blake sang, and Drysdale, and the other man. And then the captain was called on for his yarn; and, the general voice being for "something that had happened to him," "the strangest thing that had ever happened to him at sea," the old gentleman laid down his pipe and sat up in his chair with his hands on his stick and began.

#### THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

It will be forty years ago, next month, since the ship I was then in came home from the West Indies station, and was paid off. I had nowhere in particular to go just then, and so was very glad to get a letter, the morning after I went ashore at Portsmouth, asking me to go down to Plymouth for a week or so. It came from an old sailor, a friend of my family, who had been commodore of the fleet. He lived at Plymouth; he was a thorough old sailor, — what you young men would call "an old salt," — and couldn't live out of sight of the blue sea and the shipping. It is a disease that a good many of us take who have spent our best years on the sea. I have it myself, — a sort of feeling that we must be under another kind of

Providence, when we look out and see a hill on this side and a hill on that. It's wonderful to see the trees come out and the corn grow, but then it doesn't come so home to an old sailor. I know that we're all just as much under the Lord's hand on shore as at sea ; but you can't read in a book you haven't been used to, and they that go down to the sea in ships, they see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. It isn't their fault if they don't see his wonders on the land so easily as other people.

But, for all that, there's no man enjoys a cruize in the country more than a sailor. It's forty years ago since I started for Plymouth, but I haven't forgotten the road a bit, or how beautiful it was, all through the New Forest, and over Salisbury Plain, and then on by the mail to Exeter, and through Devonshire. It took me three days to get to Plymouth, for we didn't get about so quick in those days.

The commodore was very kind to me when I got there, and I went about with him to the ships in the bay, and through the dockyard, and picked up a good deal that was of use to me afterwards. I was a lieutenant in those days, and had seen a good deal of service, and I found the old commodore had a great-nephew whom he had adopted, and had set his whole heart upon. He was an old bachelor himself, but the boy had come to live with him, and was to go to sea ; so he wanted to put him under some one who would give an eye to him for the first year or two. He was a light slip of a boy then, fourteen years old, with deep-set blue eyes and long eyelashes, and cheeks like a girl's, but as brave as a lion and as merry as a lark. The old gentleman was very pleased to see that we took to one another. We used to bathe and boat together ; and he was never tired of hearing my stories about the great admirals, and the fleet, and the stations I had been on.

Well, it was agreed that I should apply for a ship again directly, and go up to London with a letter to the admiralty from the commodore, to help things on. After a month or two, I was appointed to a brig, lying at Spithead; and so I wrote off to the commodore, and he got his boy a midshipman's berth on board, and brought him to Portsmouth himself, a day or two before we sailed for the Mediterranean. The old gentleman came on board to see his boy's hammock slung, and went below into the cockpit to make sure that all was right. He only left us by the pilot-boat, when we were well out in the channel. He was very low at parting from his boy, but bore up as well as he could; and we promised to write to him from Gibraltar, and as often afterwards as we had a chance.

I was soon as proud and fond of little Tom Holdsworth as if he had been my own younger brother; and, for that matter, so were all the crew, from our captain to the cook's boy. He was such a gallant youngster, and yet so gentle. In one cutting-out business we had he climbed over the boatswain's shoulders, and was almost first on deck; how he came out of it without a scratch I can't think to this day. But he hadn't a bit of bluster in him, and was as kind as a woman to any one who was wounded or down with sickness.

After we had been out about a year, we were sent to cruise off Malta, on the lookout for the French fleet. It was a long business, and the post wasn't so good then as it is now. We were sometimes for months without getting a letter, and knew nothing of what was happening at home, or anywhere else. We had a sick time too on board, and at last he got a fever. He bore up against it like a man, and wouldn't knock off duty for a long time. He was midshipman of my watch; so I used to make him turn in early, and tried to ease things to him as much as I could; but he



didn't pick up, and I began to get very anxious about him. I talked to the doctor, and turned matters over in my own mind, and at last I came to think he wouldn't get any better unless he could sleep out of the cockpit. So, one night, the 20th of October it was, — I remember it well enough, better than I remember any day since ; it was a dirty night, blowing half a gale of wind from the southward, and we were under close-reefed topsails, — I had the first watch, and at nine o'clock I sent him down to my cabin to sleep there, where he would be fresher and quieter, and I was to turn into his hammock when my watch was over.

I was on deck three hours or so after he went down, and the weather got dirtier and dirtier, and the scud drove by, and the wind sang and hummed through the rigging — it made me melancholy to listen to it. — I could think of nothing but the youngster down below, and what I should say to his poor old uncle if any thing happened. Well, soon after midnight I went down and turned into his hammock. I didn't go to sleep at once, for I remember very well listening to the creaking of the ship's timbers as she rose to the swell, and watching the lamp, which was slung from the ceiling, and gave light enough to make out the other hammocks swinging slowly all together. At last, however, I dropped off, and I reckon I must have been asleep about an hour, when I woke with a start. For the first moment, I didn't see any thing but the swinging hammocks and the lamp ; but, then, suddenly I became aware that some one was standing by my hammock, and I saw the figure as plainly as I see any one of you now, for the foot of the hammock was close to the lamp, and the light struck full across on the head and shoulders, which was all that I could see of him. There he was, the old commodore ; his grizzled hair coming out from under a red woollen nightcap, and his shoulders wrapped in an old

threadbare blue dressing-gown, which I had often seen him in. His face looked pale and drawn, and there was a wistful, disappointed look about the eyes. I was so taken aback I couldn't speak, but lay watching him. He looked full at my face once or twice, but didn't seem to recognize me; and, just as I was getting back my tongue and going to speak, he said, slowly: 'Where's Tom? this is his hammock. I can't see Tom;' and then he looked vaguely about and passed away somehow, but how, I couldn't see. In a moment or two I jumped out and hurried to my cabin, but young Holdsworth was fast asleep. I sat down, and wrote down just what I had seen, making a note of the exact time, twenty minutes to two. I didn't turn in again, but sat watching the youngster. When he woke I asked him if he had heard any thing of his great-uncle by the last mail. Yes, he had heard; the old gentleman was rather feeble, but nothing particular the matter. I kept my own counsel and never told a soul in the ship; and, when the mail came to hand a few days afterwards with a letter, from the commodore to his nephew, dated late in September, saying that he was well, I thought the figure by my hammock must have been all my own fancy.

However, by the next mail came the news of the old commodore's death. It had been a very sudden break-up, his executor said. He had left all his property, which was not much, to his great-nephew, who was to get leave to come home as soon as he could.

The first time we touched at Malta, Tom Holdsworth left us, and went home. We followed about two years afterwards, and the first thing I did after landing was to find out the commodore's executor. He was a quiet, dry little Plymouth lawyer, and very civilly answered all my questions about the last days of my old friend. At last

I asked him to tell me as near as he could the time of his death ; and he put on his spectacles, and got his diary, and turned over the leaves. I was quite nervous till he looked up and said, "Twenty-five minutes to two, sir, A.M., on the morning of October 21st ; or it might be a few minutes later."

"How do you mean, sir?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "it is an odd story. The doctor was sitting with me, watching the old man, and, as I tell you, at twenty-five minutes to two, he got up and said it was all over. We stood together, talking in whispers, for, it might be, four or five minutes, when the body seemed to move. He was an odd old man, you know, the commodore, and we never could get him properly to bed, but he lay in his red nightcap and old dressing-gown, with a blanket over him. It was not a pleasant sight, I can tell you, sir. I don't think one of you gentlemen, who are bred to face all manner of dangers, would have liked it. As I was saying, the body first moved, and then sat up, propping itself behind with its hands. The eyes were wide open, and he looked at us for a moment, and said, slowly, 'I've been to the Mediterranean but I didn't see Tom.' Then the body sank back again, and this time the old commodore was really dead. But it was not a pleasant thing to happen to one, sir. I do not remember any thing like it in my forty years' practice."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DEPARTURES EXPECTED AND UNEXPECTED.

THERE was a silence of a few seconds after the captain had finished his story, all the men sitting with eyes fixed on him, and not a little surprised at the results of their call. Drysdale was the first to break the silence, which he did with a "By George!" and a long respiration; but, as he did not seem prepared with any further remark, Tom took up the running.

"What a strange story," he said; "and that really happened to you, Captain Hardy?"

"To me, sir, in the Mediterranean, more than forty years ago."

"The strangest thing about it is that the old commodore should have managed to get all the way to the ship, and then not have known where his nephew was," said Blake.

"He only knew his nephew's berth, you see, sir," said the captain.

"But he might have beat about through the ship till he had found him."

"You must remember that he was at his last breath, sir," said the captain; "you can't expect a man to have his head clear at such a moment."

"Not a man, perhaps, but I should a ghost," said Blake.

"Time was every thing to him," went on the captain, without regarding the interruption, "space nothing. But the strangest part of it is that *I* should have seen the figure at all. It's true I had been thinking of the old



uncle, because of the boy's illness ; but I can't suppose he was thinking of me, and, as I say, he never recognized me. I have taken a great deal of interest in such matters since that time, but I have never met with just such a case as this."

"No, that is the puzzle. One can fancy his appearing to his nephew well enough," said Tom.

"We can't account for these things, or for a good many other things which ought to be quite as startling, only we see them every day. But now I think it is time for us to be going ; eh, Jack?" and the captain and his son rose to go.

Tom saw that it would be no kindness to them to try to prolong the sitting, and so he got up too, to accompany them to the gates. This broke up the party. Before going, Drysdale, after whispering to Tom, went up to Captain Hardy, and said, —

"I want to ask you to do me a favor, sir. Will you and your son breakfast with me to-morrow?"

"We shall be very happy, sir," said the captain.

"I think, father, you had better breakfast with me, quietly. We are much obliged to Mr. Drysdale, but I can't give up a whole morning. Besides, I have several things to talk to you about."

"Nonsense, Jack," blurted out the old sailor, "leave your books alone for one morning. I'm come up here to enjoy myself, and see your friends."

Hardy gave a slight shrug of his shoulders at the word friends, and Drysdale, who saw it, looked a little confused. He had never asked Hardy to his rooms before. The captain saw that something was the matter, and hastened in his own way to make all smooth again.

"Never mind Jack, sir," he said, "he shall come. It's

a great treat to me to be with young men, especially when they are friends of my boy."

"I hope you'll come as a personal favor to me," said Drysdale, turning to Hardy. "Brown, you'll bring him, wont you?"

"Oh, yes, I'm sure he'll come," said Tom.

"That's all right. Good-night, then;" and Drysdale went off.

Hardy and Tom accompanied the captain to the gate. During his passage across the two quadrangles, the old gentleman was full of the praises of the men, and of protestations as to the improvement in social manners and customs since his day, when there could have been no such meeting, he declared, without blackguardism and drunkenness, at least among young officers, but then they had less to think of than Oxford men, no proper education. And so the captain was evidently travelling back into the great trireme question when they reached the gate. As they could go no further with him, however, he had to carry away his solution of the three-banks-of-oars difficulty in his own bosom to the Mitre.

"Don't let us go in," said Tom, as the gate closed on the captain, and they turned back into the quadrangle, "let us take a turn or two;" so they walked up and down the inner quad in the starlight.

Just at first they were a good deal embarrassed and confused: but before long, though not without putting considerable force on himself, Tom got back into something like his old familiar way of unbosoming himself to his re-found friend, and Hardy showed more than his old anxiety to meet him half-way. His ready and undisguised sympathy soon dispersed the few remaining clouds which were still hanging between them; and Tom found it almost a pleasure, instead of a dreary task, as he had anticipated,

to make a full confession, and state the case clearly and strongly against himself to one who claimed neither by word nor look the least superiority over him, and never seemed to remember that he himself had been ill-treated in the matter.

"He had such a chance of lecturing me and didn't do it," thought Tom, afterwards, when he was considering why he felt so very grateful to Hardy. "It was so cunning of him, too. If he had begun lecturing, I should have begun to defend myself, and never have felt half such a scamp as I did when I was telling it all out to him in my own way."

The result of Hardy's management was that Tom made a clean breast of it, telling every thing, down to his night at the ragged school; and what an effect his chance opening of the Apology had had on him. Here for the first time Hardy came in with his usual dry, keen voice, "You needn't have gone so far back as Plato for that lesson."

"I don't understand," said Tom.

"Well, there's something about an indwelling spirit which guideth every man in St. Paul, isn't there?"

"Yes, a great deal," Tom answered, after a pause; "but it isn't the same thing."

"Why not the same thing?"

"Oh, surely, you must feel it. It would be almost blasphemy in us now to talk as St. Paul talked. It is much easier to face the notion, or the fact, of a demon or spirit such as Socrates felt to be in him, than to face what St. Paul seems to be meaning."

"Yes, much easier. The only question is whether we will be heathens or not."

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why, a spirit was speaking to Socrates, and guiding

him. He obeyed the guidance, but knew not whence it came. A spirit is striving with us too, and trying to guide us — we feel that just as much as he did. Do we know what spirit it is? whence it comes? Will we obey it? If we can't name it — know no more of it than he knew about his demon, of course, we are in no better position than he — in fact, heathens."

Tom made no answer, and, after a silent turn or two more, Hardy said, "Let us go in;" and they went to his rooms. When the candles were lighted, Tom saw the array of books on the table, several of them open, and remembered how near the examinations were.

"I see you want to work," he said. "Well, good-night. I know how fellows like you hate being thanked — there, you needn't wince; I'm not going to try it on. The best way to thank you, I know, is to go straight for the future. I'll do that, please God, this time at any rate. Now what ought I to do, Hardy?"

"Well, it's very hard to say. I've thought about it a great deal this last few days, — since I felt you were coming round, — but can't make up my mind. How do you feel yourself? What's your own instinct about it?"

"Of course, I must break it all off at once, completely," said Tom, mournfully, and half hoping that Hardy might not agree with him.

"Of course," answered Hardy; "but how?"

"In the way that will pain her least. I would sooner lose my hand or bite my tongue off than that she should feel lowered, or lose any self-respect, you know," said Tom, looking helplessly at his friend.

"Yes, that's all right, — you must take all you can on your own shoulders. It must leave a sting though for both of you, manage how you will."



"But I can't bear to let her think I don't care for her — I needn't do that — I can't do that."

"I don't know what to advise. However, I believe I was wrong in thinking she cared for you so much. She will be hurt, of course — she can't help being hurt — but it won't be so bad as I used to think."

Tom made no answer; in spite of all his good resolutions, he was a little piqued at this last speech. Hardy went on presently, "I wish she were well out of Oxford. It's a bad town for a girl to be living in, especially as a barmaid in a place which we haunt. I don't know that she will take much harm now; but it's a very trying thing for a girl of that sort to be thrown every day amongst a dozen young men above her in rank, and not one in ten of whom has any manliness about him."

"How do you mean — no manliness?"

"I mean that a girl in her position isn't safe with us. If we had any manliness in us she would be —"

"You can't expect all men to be blocks of ice, or milk-sops," said Tom, who was getting nettled.

"Don't think that I meant you," said Hardy; "indeed, I didn't. But surely, think a moment; is it a proof of manliness that the pure and the weak should fear you and shrink from you? Which is the true — ay, and the brave — man, he who trembles before a woman, or he before whom a woman trembles?"

"Neither," said Tom; "but I see what you mean, and when you put it that way, it's clear enough."

"But you're wrong in saying 'neither,' if you *do* see what I mean." Tom was silent. "Can there be any true manliness without purity?" went on Hardy. Tom drew a deep breath, but said nothing. "And where, then, can you point to a place where is so little manliness as here? It makes my blood boil to see what one must see

every day. There are a set of men up here, and have been ever since I can remember the place, not one of whom can look at a modest woman without making her shudder."

"There must always be some blackguards," said Tom.

"Yes; but unluckily the blackguards set the fashion, and give the tone to public opinion. I'm sure both of us have seen enough to know perfectly well that up here, amongst us undergraduates, men who are deliberately and avowedly profligates, are rather admired and courted, — are said to know the world, and all that, — while a man who tries to lead a pure life, and makes no secret of it, is openly sneered at by them, looked down on more or less by the great mass of men, and, to use the word you used just now, thought a milksop by almost all."

"I don't think it is so bad as that," said Tom. "There are many men who would respect him, though they might not be able to follow him."

"Of course, I never meant that there are not many such, but they don't set the fashion. I am sure I'm right. Let us try it by the best test. Haven't you and I, in our secret hearts, this cursed feeling, that the sort of man we are talking of *is* a milksop?"

After a moment's thought, Tom answered, "I am afraid I have, but I really am thoroughly ashamed of it now, Hardy. But you haven't it. If you had it you could never have spoken to me as you have."

"I beg your pardon. No man is more open than I to the bad influences of any place he lives in. God knows I am even as other men, and worse; for I have been taught ever since I could speak, that the crown of all real manliness, of all Christian manliness, is purity."

Neither of the two spoke for some minutes. Then Hardy looked at his watch,—

"Past eleven," he said. "I must do some work. Well, Brown, this will be a day to be remembered in my calendar."

Tom wrung his hand, but did not venture to reply. As he got to the door, however, he turned back, and said,—

"Do you think I ought to write to her?"

"Well, you can try. You'll find it a bitter business, I fear."

"I'll try, then. Good-night."

Tom went to his own rooms, and set to work to write his letter; and certainly found it as difficult and unpleasant a task as he had ever set himself to work upon. Half a dozen times he tore up sheet after sheet of his attempts; and got up and walked about, and plunged and kicked mentally against the collar and traces in which he had harnessed himself by his friend's help,—trying to convince himself that Hardy was a Puritan, who had lived quite differently from other men, and knew nothing of what a man ought to do in a case like this. That, after all, very little harm had been done! The world would never go on at all if people were to be so scrupulous! Probably, not another man in the college, except Grey, perhaps, would think any thing of what he had done! Done!—why, what had he done? He couldn't be taking it more seriously if he had ruined her!

At this point he managed to bring himself up sharp again more than once. "No thanks to *me*, at any rate, that she isn't ruined. Had I any pity, any scruples? My God, what a mean, selfish rascal I have been!" and then he sat down again, and wrote, and scratched out what he had written, till the other fit came on, and something of the same process had to be gone through again.

I am sure all readers must recognize the process, and will remember many occasions on which they have had to

put bridle and bit on, and ride themselves as if they had been horses or mules without understanding; and what a trying business it was — as bad as getting a young colt past a gypsy encampment in a narrow lane.

At last, after many trials, Tom got himself well in hand, and produced something which seemed to satisfy him; for, after reading it three or four times, he put it in a cover, with a small case, which he produced from his desk, sealed it, directed it, and then went to bed.

Next morning, after chapel, he joined Hardy, and walked to his rooms with him, and after a few words on indifferent matters, said, —

“Well, I wrote my letter last night.”

“Did you satisfy yourself?”

“Yes, I think so. I don’t know, though, on second thoughts: it was very tough work.”

“I was afraid you would find it so.”

“But wouldn’t you like to see it?”

“No, thank you. I suppose my father will be here directly.”

“But I wish you would read it through,” said Tom, producing a copy.

“Well, if you wish it, I suppose I must; but I don’t see how I can do any good.”

Hardy took the letter, and sat down, and Tom drew a chair close to him, and watched his face while he read: —

“It is best for us both that I should not see you any more, at least, at present. I feel that I have done you a great wrong. I dare not say much to you, for fear of making that wrong greater. I cannot, I need not tell you how I despise myself now — how I long to make you any amends in my power. If ever I can be of any service to you, I do hope that nothing which has passed will hinder you from applying to me. You will not believe how it pains me to write this; how should you? I don’t deserve



that you should believe any thing I say. I must seem heartless to you ; I have been, I am heartless. I hardly know what I am writing. I shall long all my life to hear good news of you. I don't ask you to pardon me, but if you can prevail on yourself not to send back the enclosed, and will keep it as a small remembrance of one who is deeply sorry for the wrong he has done you, but who cannot and will not say he is sorry that he ever met you, you will be adding another to the many kindnesses which I have to thank you for, and which I shall never forget."

Hardy read it over several times, as Tom watched impatiently, unable to make out any thing from his face.

"What do you think? You don't think there's any thing wrong in it, I hope?"

"No, indeed, my dear fellow. I really think it does you credit. I don't know what else you could have said very well, only —"

"Only what?"

"Couldn't you have made it a little shorter?"

"No, I couldn't; but you don't mean that. What did you mean by that 'only'?"

"Why, I don't think this letter will end the business; at least, I'm afraid not."

"But what more could I have said?"

"Nothing more, certainly; but couldn't you have been a little quieter, — it's difficult to get the right word, — a little cooler, perhaps? Couldn't you have made the part about not seeing her again a little more decided?"

"But you said I needn't pretend I didn't care for her."

"Did I?"

"Yes. Besides, it would have been a lie."

"I don't want you to tell a lie, certainly. But how about this 'small remembrance' that you speak of? What's that?"

"Oh, nothing! only a little locket I bought for her."

"With some of your hair in it?"

"Well, of course! Come, now, there's no harm in that?"

"No; no harm. Do you think she will wear it?"

"How can I tell?"

"It may make her think it isn't all at an end, I'm afraid. If she always wears your hair —"

"By Jove, you're too bad, Hardy. I wish you had had to write it yourself. It's all very easy to pull my letter to pieces, I dare say, but —"

"I didn't want to read it, remember."

"No more you did. I forgot. But I wish you would just write down now what you would have said."

"Yes, I think I see myself at it. By the way, of course you have sent your letter?"

"Yes; I sent it off before chapel."

"I thought so. In that case I don't think we need trouble ourselves further with the form of the document."

"Oh, that's only shirking. How do you know I may not want it for the next occasion?"

"No, no! Don't let us begin laughing about it. A man never ought to have to write such letters twice in his life. If he has, why he may get a good enough precedent for the second out of the 'Complete Letter Writer.'"

"So you wont correct my copy?"

"No, not I."

At this point in their dialogue, Captain Hardy appeared on the scene, and the party went off to Drysdale's to breakfast.

Captain Hardy's visit to St. Ambrose was a great success. He stayed some four or five days, and saw every thing that was to be seen, and enjoyed it all in a sort of reverent way which was almost comic. Tom devoted himself to the work of cicerone, and did his best to do

the work thoroughly. Oxford was a sort of Utopia to the captain, who was resolutely bent on seeing nothing but beauty and learning and wisdom within the precincts of the university. On one or two occasions his faith was tried sorely by the sight of young gentlemen gracefully apparelled, dawdling along two together in low, easy pony carriages, or lying on their backs in punts for hours smoking, with not even a *Bell's Life* by them to pass the time. Dawdling and doing nothing were the objects of his special abhorrence; but with this trifling exception the captain continued steadily to behold towers and quadrangles and chapels and the inhabitants of the colleges, through rose-colored spectacles. His respect for a "regular education," and for the seat of learning at which it was dispensed, was so strong, that he invested not only the tutors, doctors, and proctors (of whom he saw little, except at a distance), but even the most empty-headed undergraduate whose acquaintance he made, with a sort of fancy halo of scientific knowledge, and often talked to those youths in a way which was curiously bewildering and embarrassing to them. Drysdale was particularly hit by it. He had humor and honesty enough himself to appreciate the captain, but it was a constant puzzle to him to know what to make of it all.

"He's a regular old brick, is the captain," he said to Tom, on the last evening of the old gentleman's visit; "but, by Jove, I can't help thinking he must be poking fun at us half his time. It is rather too rich to hear him talking on as if we were all as fond of Greek as he seems to be, and as if no man ever got drunk up here."

"I declare I think he believes it," said Tom. "You see we're all careful enough before him."

"That son of his, too, must be a good fellow. Don't you see he can never have peached? His father was tell-

ing me last night what a comfort it was to him to see that Jack's poverty had been no drawback to him. He had always told him it would be so amongst English gentlemen, and now he found him living quietly and independently, and yet on equal terms, and friends with men far above him in rank and fortune, 'like you, sir,' the old boy said. By Jove, Brown, I felt devilish foolish. I believe I blushed, and it isn't often I indulge in that sort of luxury. If I weren't ashamed of doing it now, I should try to make friends with Hardy. But I don't know how to face him, and I doubt whether he wouldn't think me too much of a rip to be intimate with."

Tom, at his own special request, attended the captain's departure, and took his seat opposite to him and his son at the back of the Southampton coach, to accompany him a few miles out of Oxford. For the first mile, the captain was full of the pleasures of his visit, and of invitations to Tom to come and see them in the vacation. If he did not mind homely quarters he would find a hearty welcome, and there was no finer bathing and boating place on the coast. If he liked to bring his gun, there were plenty of blue rock-pigeons and sea-otters in the caves at the point. Tom protested, with the greatest sincerity, that there was nothing he should enjoy so much. Then the young men got down to walk up Bagley Hill, and when they mounted again found the captain with a large leather case in his hand, out of which he took two five-pound notes, and began pressing them on his son, while Tom tried to look as if he did not know what was going on. For some time Hardy steadily refused, and the contention became animated, and it was useless to pretend any longer not to hear.

"Why, Jack, you're not too proud, I hope, to take a present from your own father," the captain said, at last.



"But, my dear father, I don't want the money. You make me a very good allowance already."

"Now, Jack, just listen to me, and be reasonable. You know a great many of your friends have been very hospitable to me: I could not return their hospitality myself, but I wish you to do so for me."

"Well, father, I can do that without this money."

"Now, Jack," said the captain, pushing forward the notes again, "I insist on your taking them. You will pain me very much if you don't take them."

So the son took the notes at last, looking as most men of his age would if they had just lost them, while the father's face was radiant as he replaced his pocket-book in the breast-pocket inside his coat. His eye caught Tom's in the midst of the operation, and the latter could not help looking a little confused, as if he had been unintentionally obtruding on their privacy. But the captain at once laid his hand on his knee and said, —

"A young fellow is never the worse for having a ten-pound note to veer and haul on; eh, Mr. Brown?"

"No, indeed, sir. A great deal better, I think," said Tom, and was quite comfortable again. The captain had no new coat that summer, but he always looked like a gentleman.

Soon the coach stopped to take up a parcel at a cross-road, and the young men got down. They stood watching it until it disappeared round a corner of the road, and then turned back towards Oxford and struck into Bagley Wood, Hardy listening with evident pleasure to his friend's enthusiastic praise of his father. But he was not in a talking humor, and they were soon walking along together in silence.

This was the first time they had been alone together since the morning after their reconciliation; so, presently,

Tom seized the occasion to recur to the subject which was uppermost in his thoughts.

"She has never answered my letter," he began, abruptly.

"I'm very glad of it," said Hardy.

"But, why?"

"Because, you know you want it all broken off completely."

"Yes; but still she might have just acknowledged it. You don't know how hard it is to me to keep away from the place."

"My dear fellow, I know it must be hard work, but you are doing the right thing."

"Yes, I hope so," said Tom, with a sigh. "I haven't been within a hundred yards of 'The Choughs' this five days. The old lady must think it so odd."

Hardy made no reply. What could he say, but that no doubt she did?

"Would you mind doing me a great favor?" said Tom, after a minute.

"Any thing I can do. What is it?"

"Why, just to step round on our way back,—I will stay as far off as you like,—and see how things are going on;—how she is."

"Very well. Don't you like this view of Oxford? I always think it is the best of them all."

"No. You don't see any thing of half the colleges," said Tom, who was very loth to leave the other subject for the picturesque.

"But you get all the spires and towers so well, and the river in the foreground. Look at that shadow of a cloud skimming over Christ Church meadow. It's a splendid old place after all."

"It may be from a distance, to an outsider," said Tom;

"but I don't know—it's an awfully chilly, deadening kind of place to live in. There's something in the life of the place that sits on me like a weight, and makes me feel dreary."

"How long have you felt that? You're coming out in a new line."

"I wish I were. I want a new line. I don't care a straw for cricket; I hardly like pulling; and as for those wine parties, day after day, and suppers, night after night, they turn me sick to think of."

"You have the remedy in your own hands, at any rate," said Hardy, smiling.

"How do you mean?"

"Why, you needn't go to them."

"Oh! one can't help going to them. What else is there to do?"

Tom waited for an answer, but his companion only nodded to show that he was listening, as he strolled on down the path, looking at the view.

"I can say what I feel to you, Hardy. I always have been able, and it's such a comfort to me now. It was you who put these sort of thoughts into my head, too, so you ought to sympathize with me."

"I do, my dear fellow. But you'll be all right again in a few days."

"Don't you believe it. It isn't only what you seem to think, Hardy. You don't know me so well as I do you, after all. No; I'm not just love-sick and hipped, because I can't go and see her. That has something to do with it, I dare say; but it's the sort of shut-up, selfish life we lead here that I can't stand. A man isn't meant to live only with fellows like himself, with good allowances paid quarterly, and no care but how to amuse themselves. One is old enough for something better than that, I'm sure."

"No doubt," said Hardy, with provoking taciturnity.

"And the moment one tries to break through it, one only gets into trouble."

"Yes, there's a good deal of danger of that certainly," said Hardy.

"Don't you often long to be in contact with some of the realities of life, with men and women who haven't their bread and butter all ready cut for them? How can a place be a university where no one can come up who hasn't two hundred a year or so to live on?"

"You ought to have been at Oxford four hundred years ago, when there were more thousands here than we have hundreds."

"I don't see that. It must have been ten times as bad then."

"Not at all. But it must have been a very different state of things from ours; they must have been almost all poor scholars, who worked for their living, or lived on next to nothing."

"How do you really suppose they lived though?"

"Oh, I don't know. But how should you like it now, if we had fifty poor scholars at St. Ambrose, besides us servitors—say ten tailors, ten shoemakers, and so on, who came up from love of learning, and attended all the lectures with us, and worked for the present undergraduates while they were hunting and cricketing and boating?"

"Well, I think it would be a very good thing. At any rate, we should save in tailors' bills."

"Even if we didn't get our coats so well built," said Hardy, laughing. "Well, Brown, you have a most catholic taste, and 'a capacity for taking in new truths,' all the elements of a good Radical in you."

"I tell you I hate Radicals!" said Tom, indignantly.

"Well, here we are in the town. I'll go round by 'The



Choughs' and catch you up before you get to High Street."

Tom, left to himself, walked slowly on for a little way, and then quickly back again in an impatient, restless, manner, and was within a few yards of the corner where they had parted when Hardy appeared again. He saw at a glance that something had happened.

"What is it? — she is not ill?" he said, quickly.

"No; quite well, her aunt says."

"You didn't see her then?"

"No. The fact is she has gone home."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE ENGLEBOURN CONSTABLE.

ON the afternoon of a splendid day in the early part of June, some four or five days after the Sunday on which the morning service at Englebourn was interrupted by the fire at Farmer Grove's, David Johnson, tailor and constable of the parish, was sitting at his work, in a small erection, half shed, half summer-house, which leaned against the back of his cottage. Not that David had not a regular workshop with a window looking into the village street, and a regular counter close under it, on which passers-by might see him stitching, and from whence he could gossip with them easily, as was his wont. But although the constable kept the king's peace and made garments of all kinds for his livelihood, — from the curate's frock down to the ploughboy's fustians, — he was addicted for his pleasure and solace to the keeping of bees. The constable's bees inhabited a row of hives in the narrow strip of garden which ran away at the back of the cottage. This strip of garden was bordered along the whole of one side by the rector's premises. Now honest David loved gossip well, and considered it a part of his duty as constable to be well up in all events and rumors which happened or arose within his liberties. But he loved his bees better than gossip, and, as he was now in hourly expectation that they would be swarming, was working, as has been said, in his summer-house, that he might be at hand at the critical moment. The rough table on which he was seated com-

manded a view of the hives; his big scissors and some shreds of velveteen lay near him on the table, also the street-door key and an old shovel, of which the uses will appear presently.

On his knees lay the black velveteen coat, the Sunday garment of Harry Winburn, to which he was fitting new sleeves. In his exertions at the top of the chimney in putting out the fire, Harry had grievously damaged the garment in question. The farmer had presented him with five shillings on the occasion, which sum was quite inadequate to the purchase of a new coat, and Harry, being too proud to call the farmer's attention to the special damage which he had suffered in his service, had contented himself with bringing his old coat to be new-sleeved.

Harry was a favorite with the constable on account of his intelligence and independence, and because of his relations with the farmers of Englebourne on the allotment question. Although by his office the representative of law and order in the parish, David was a man of the people, and sympathized with the peasantry more than with the farmers. He had passed some years of his apprenticeship at Reading, where he had picked up notions on political and social questions much ahead of the Englebourne worthies. When he returned to his native village, being a wise man, he had kept his new lights in the background, and consequently, had succeeded in the object of his ambition, and had been appointed constable. His reason for seeking the post was a desire to prove that the old joke as to the manliness of tailors had no application to his case, and this he had established to the satisfaction of all the neighborhood by the resolute manner in which, whenever called on, he performed his duties. And, now that his character was made and his position secure, he was not so careful of be-

traying his leanings, and had lost some custom amongst the farmers in consequence of them.

The job on which he was employed naturally turned his thoughts to Harry. He stitched away, now weighing in his mind whether he should not go himself to Farmer Grove, and represent to him that he ought to give Harry a new coat; now rejoicing over the fact that the rector had decided to let Harry have another acre of the allotment land; now speculating on the attachment of his favorite to the gardener's daughter, and whether he could do any thing to forward his suit. In the pursuit of which thoughts he had forgotten all about his bees, when suddenly a great humming arose, followed by a rush through the air like the passing of an express train, which recalled him to himself. He jumped from the table, casting aside the coat, and, seizing the key and shovel, hurried out into the garden, beating the two together with all his might.

The process in question, known in country phrase as "tanging," is founded upon the belief that the bees will not settle unless under the influence of this peculiar music; and the constable, holding faithfully to the popular belief, rushed down his garden "tanging," as though his life depended upon it, in the hopes that the soothing sound would induce the swarm to settle at once on his own apple-trees.

Is "tanging" a superstition or not? People learned in bees ought to know, but I never happened to meet one who had considered the question. It is curious how such beliefs or superstitions fix themselves in the popular mind of a country-side, and are held by wise and simple alike. David the constable was a most sensible and open-minded man of his time and class, but Kemble or Akerman, or other learned Anglo-Saxon scholar, would have vainly explained to him that "tang," is but the old word for "to hold," and that the object of "tanging" is, not to lure the



bees with sweet music of key and shovel, but to give notice to the neighbors that they have swarmed, and that the owner of the maternal hive means to hold on to his right to the emigrants. David would have listened to the lecture with pity, and have retained unshaken belief in his music.

In the present case, however, the tanging was of little avail, for the swarm, after wheeling once or twice in the air, disappeared from the eyes of the constable over the rector's wall. He went on "tanging" violently for a minute or two, and then paused to consider what was to be done. Should he get over the wall into the rector's garden at once, or should he go round to ask leave to carry his search into the parsonage grounds? As a man and bee-fancier he was on the point of following straight at once, over wall and fence; but the constable was also strong within him. He was not on the best of terms with old Simon, the rector's gardener, and his late opposition to Miss Winter in the matter of the singing also came into his mind. So he resolved that the parish constable would lose caste by disregarding his neighbor's boundaries, and was considering what to do next when he heard a footstep and short cough on the other side the wall which he recognized.

"Be you there, Maester Simon?" he called out. Whereupon the walker on the other side pulled up, and after a second appeal answered, shortly, —

"Ees."

"Hev'ee seed aught o' my bees? Thaay've a bin' and riz and gone off somweres athert the wall."

"E'es, I seen 'em."

"Wer' be 'em, then?"

"Aal-amang wi ourn in the limes."

"Aal-amang wi yourn!" exclaimed the constable. "Drat-  
tle'em. Thaay be mwore trouble than they be wuth."

"I know as thaay wur yourn soon as ever I sot eyes on  
'em," old Simon went on.

"How did'ee know 'em then?" asked the constable.

"Cause thine be a'al zettin' crassleggèd," said Simon,  
with a chuckle. "Thee medst cum and pick 'em all out  
if thee'st a mind to 't."

Simon was mollified by his own joke, and broke into a  
short, dry, cachination, half laugh, half cough; while the  
constable, who was pleased and astonished to find his  
neighbor in such a good-humor, hastened to get an empty  
hive and a pair of hedger's gloves, — fortified with which  
he left his cottage and made the best of his way up street  
towards the rectory gate, hard by which stood Simon's  
cottage. The old gardener was of an impatient nature, and  
the effect of the joke had almost time to evaporate, and  
Simon was fast relapsing into his usual state of mind tow-  
ards his neighbor before the latter made his appearance.

"Wher' hast been so long?" he exclaimed, when the  
constable joined him.

"I seed the young missus and t'other young lady a  
standin' talkin' afore the door," said David; "so I stopped  
back, so as not to disturve 'em."

"Be 'em gone in? Who was 'em talkin' to?"

"To thy missus, and thy daarter too, I b'lieve 'twas.  
Thaay be both at whoam, bean't 'em?"

"Like enough. But what was 'em zayin'?"

"I couldn't heer nothin' partic'lar, but I judged as 'twas  
summat about Sunday and the fire."

"'Tis na use for thaay to go on fillin' our pplace wi'  
bottles. I dwont mean to take any mwore doctor's stuff."

Simon, it may be said, by the way, had obstinately re-  
fused to take any medicine since his fall, and had main-

tained a constant war on the subject, both with his own women and with Miss Winter, whom he had impressed more than ever with a belief in his wrong-headedness.

"Ah! and how be 'ee, tho', Maester Simon?" said David; "I didn't mind to ax afore. You dwon't feel no wus for your fall, I hopes?"

"I feels a bit stiffish like, and as if summat wus cuttin' m' at times, when I lifts up my arms."

"'Tis a mercy 'tis no wus," said David; "we bean't so young nor so lissom as we was, Maester Simon."

To which remark Simon replied by a grunt. He disliked allusions to his age, — a rare dislike among his class in that part of the country. Most of the people are fond of making themselves out older than they are, and love to dwell on their experiences, and believe, as firmly as the rest of us, that every thing has altered for the worse in the parish and district since their youth.

But Simon, though short of words and temper, and an uncomfortable acquaintance in consequence, was inclined to be helpful enough in other ways. The constable, with his assistance, had very soon hived his swarm of cross-legged bees.

Then the constable insisted on Simon's coming with him and taking a glass of ale, which, after a little coquetting, Simon consented to do. So, after carrying his recapture safely home, and erecting the hive on a three-legged stand of his own workmanship, he hastened to rejoin Simon, and the two soon found themselves together in the bar of the "Red Lion."

The constable wished to make the most of this opportunity, and so began at once to pump Simon as to his intentions with regard to his daughter. But Simon was not easy to lead in any way whatever, and seemed in a more than usually no-business-of-yours line about his daughter.

Whether he had any one in his eye for her or not, David could not make out; but one thing he did make out, and it grieved him much. Old Simon was in a touchy and unfriendly state of mind against Harry, who, he said, was falling into bad ways, and beginning to think much too much of his self. Why was he to be wanting more allotment ground than any one else? Simon had himself given Harry some advice on the point, but not to much purpose, it would seem, as he summed up his notions on the subject by the remark that, " 'Twas waste of soap to lather an ass."

The constable now and then made a stand for his young friend, but very judiciously; and, after feeling his way for some time, he came to the conclusion — as, indeed, the truth was — that Simon was jealous of Harry's talent for growing flowers, and had been driven into his present frame of mind at hearing Miss Winter and her cousin talking about the flowers at Dame Winburn's under his very nose for the last four or five days. They had spoken thus to interest the old man, meaning to praise Harry to him. The fact was, that the old gardener was one of those men who never can stand hearing other people praised, and think that all such praise must be meant in depreciation of themselves.

When they had finished their ale, the afternoon was getting on, and the constable rose to go back to his work; while old Simon declared his intention of going down to the hayfield, to see how the mowing was getting on. He was sure that the hay would never be made properly, now that he couldn't be about as much as usual.

In another hour the coat was finished, and the constable, being uneasy in his mind, resolved to carry the garment home himself at once, and to have a talk with Dame Win-



burn. So he wrapped the coat in a handkerchief, put it under his arm, and set off down the village.

He found the dame busy with her washing; and after depositing his parcel sat down on the settle to have a talk with her. She soon got on the subject which was always uppermost in her mind, her son's prospects, and she poured out to the constable her troubles. First there was this sweethearting after old Simon's daughter, — not that Dame Winburn was going to say any thing against her, though she might have her thoughts as well as other folk, and for her part she liked to see girls that were fit for something besides dressing themselves up like their betters, — but what worried her was to see how Harry took it to heart. He wasn't like himself, and she couldn't see how it was all to end. It made him fractious, too, and he was getting into trouble about his work. He had left his regular place, and was gone mowing with a gang, most of them men out of the parish that she knew nothing about, and likely not to be the best of company. And it was all very well in harvest time, when they could go and earn good wages at mowing and reaping anywhere about, and no man could earn better than her Harry, but when it came to winter again she didn't see but what he might find the want of a regular place, and then the farmers mightn't take him on; and his own land that he had got, and seemed to think so much of, mightn't turn out all he thought it would. And so in fact the old lady was troubled in her mind, and only made the constable more uneasy. He had a vague sort of impression that he was in some way answerable for Harry, who was a good deal with him, and was fond of coming about his place. And although his cottage happened to be next to old Simon's, which might account for the fact to some extent, yet the constable was conscious of having

talked to his young friend on many matters in a way which might have unsettled him, and encouraged his natural tendency to stand up for his own rights and independence, and he knew well enough that this temper was not the one which was likely to keep a laboring man out of trouble in the parish.

He did not allow his own misgivings, however, to add to the widow's troubles, but, on the contrary, cheered her by praising up Harry as much as ever she could desire, and prophesying that all would come right, and that those that lived would see her son as respected as any man in the parish, and he shouldn't be surprised if he were churchwarden before he died. And then, astonished at his own boldness, and feeling that he was not capable of any higher flight of imagination, the constable rose to take his leave. He asked where Harry was working, and, finding that he was at mowing in the Danes' Close, set off to look after him. The kind-hearted constable could not shake off the feeling that something was going to happen to Harry which would get him into trouble, and he wanted to assure himself that as yet nothing had gone wrong. Whenever one has this sort of vague feeling about a friend, there is a natural and irresistible impulse to go and look after him, and to be with him.

The Danes' Close was a part of the glebe, a large field of some ten acres or so in extent, close to the village. Two footpaths ran across it, so that it was almost common property, and the village children considered it as much their playground as the green itself. They trampled the grass a good deal more than seemed endurable in the eyes of Simon, who managed the rector's farming operations as well as the garden; but the children had their own way, notwithstanding the threats he sometimes launched at them. Miss Winter would have sooner lost all the hay

than have narrowed their amusements. It was the most difficult piece of mowing in the parish, in consequence of the tramlings and of the large crops it bore. The Danes, or some other unknown persons, had made the land fat, perhaps with their carcasses, and the benefit had lasted to the time of our story. At any rate, the field bore splendid crops, and the mowers always got an extra shilling an acre for cutting it, by Miss Winter's special order, which was paid by Simon in the most ungracious manner, and with many grumblings that it was enough to ruin all the mowers in the country-side.

As the constable got over the stile into the hayfield, a great part of his misgivings passed out of his head. He was a simple, kindly man, whose heart lay open to all influences of scene and weather, and the Danes' Close, full of life and joy and merry sounds, as seen under the slanting rays of the evening sun, was just the place to rub all the wrinkles out of him.

The constable, however, is not singular in this matter.

What man amongst us all, if he will think the matter over calmly and fairly, can honestly say that there is any one spot on the earth's surface in which he has enjoyed so much real, wholesome, happy life as in a hayfield? He may have won renown on horseback or on foot at the sports and pastimes in which Englishmen glory; he may have shaken off all rivals, time after time, across the vales of Aylesbury, or of Berks, or any other of our famous hunting counties; he may have stalked the oldest and shyest buck in Scotch forests, and killed the biggest salmon of the year in the Tweed, and trout in the Thames; he may have made topping averages in first-rate matches of cricket; or have made long and perilous marches, dear to memory, over boggy moor, or mountain, or glacier; he may have successfully attended many breakfast-parties

within drive of May Fair, on velvet lawns, surrounded by all the fairy land of pomp and beauty and luxury which London can pour out ; he may have shone at private theatricals and at-homes, his voice may have sounded over hushed audiences at St. Stephen's, or in the law courts ; or he may have had good times in any other scenes of pleasure or triumph open to Englishmen ; but I much doubt whether, on putting his recollections fairly and quietly together, he would not say at last that the fresh-mown hayfield is the place where he has spent the most hours which he would like to live over again, the fewest which he would wish to forget.

As children, we stumble about the new-mown hay, revelling in the many colors of the prostrate grass and wild flowers, and in the power of tumbling where we please without hurting ourselves ; as small boys, we pelt one another, and the village schoolgirls, and our nursemaids, and young-lady cousins with the hay, till, hot and weary, we retire to tea or syllabub beneath the shade of some great oak or elm standing up like a monarch out of the fair pasture ; or, following the mowers, we rush with eagerness on the treasures disclosed by the scythe-stroke, — the nest of the unhappy late-laying titlark, or careless field-mouse ; as big boys, we toil ambitiously with the spare forks and rakes, or climb into the wagons and receive with open arms the delicious load as it is pitched up from below, and rises higher and higher as we pass along the long lines of haycocks ; a year or two later, we are strolling there with our first sweethearts, our souls and tongues loaded with sweet thoughts and soft speeches ; we take a turn with the scythe as the bronzed mowers lie in the shade for their short rest, and willingly pay our footing for the feat. Again, we come back with book in pocket, and our own children tumbling about as we did



before them; now romping with them, and smothering them with the sweet-smelling load—now musing and reading and dozing away the delicious summer evenings. And so shall we not come back to the end, enjoying as grandfathers the lovemaking and the rompings of younger generations yet?

Were any of us ever really disappointed or melancholy in a hayfield? Did we ever lie fairly back on a haycock and look up into the blue sky, and listen to the merry sounds, the whetting of scythes and the laughing prattle of women and children, and think evil thoughts of the world or our brethren? Not we! or if we have so done, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves, and deserve never to be out of town again during hay harvest.

There is something in the sights and sounds of a hayfield which seems to touch the same chord in one as Lowell's lines in the "Lay of Sir Launfal," which ends,—

"For a cap and bells our lives we pay;  
We wear out our lives with toiling and tasking;  
It is only Heaven that is given away;  
It is only God may be had for the asking.  
There is no price set on the lavish summer,  
And June may be had by the poorest comer."

But the philosophy of the hayfield remains to be written. Let us hope that whoever takes the subject in hand will not dissipate all its sweetness in the process of the inquiry wherein the charm lies.

The constable had not the slightest notion of speculating on his own sensations, but was very glad, nevertheless, to find his spirits rising as he stepped into the Danes' Close. All the hay was down, except a small piece in the further corner, which the mowers were upon. There were groups of children in many parts of the field, and women to look after them, mostly sitting on the fresh

swarth, working and gossiping, while the little ones played about. He had not gone twenty yards before he was stopped by the violent crying of a child; and, turning towards the voice, he saw a little girl of six or seven, who had strayed from her mother, scrambling out of the ditch, and wringing her hands in an agony of pain and terror. The poor little thing had fallen into a bed of nettles, and was very much frightened, and not a little hurt. The constable caught her up in his arms, soothing her as well as he could, and hurrying along till he found some dock-leaves, sat down with her on his knee, and rubbed her hands with the leaves, repeating the old saw —

“ Out nettle,  
In dock :  
Dock shall ha’  
A new smock ;  
Nettle shan’t  
Ha’ narrun’.”

What with rubbing, and the constable’s kind manner, and listening to the doggerel rhyme, and feeling that nettle would get her deserts, the little thing soon ceased crying. But several groups had been drawn towards the place, and amongst the rest came Miss Winter and her cousin, who had been within hearing of the disaster. The constable began to feel very nervous and uncomfortable, when he looked up from his charitable occupation, and suddenly found the rector’s daughter close to him. But his nervousness was uncalled for. The sight of what he was about, and of the tender way in which he was handling the child, drove all remembrance of his heresies and contumaciousness, in the matter of psalmody, out of her head. She greeted him with frankness and cordiality, and, presently—when he had given up his charge to the mother, who was inclined at first to be hard with the poor little

sobbing truant — came up, and said she wished to speak a few words to him.

David was highly delighted at Miss Winter's manner; but he walked along by her side not quite comfortable in his mind, for fear lest she should start the old subject of dispute, and then his duty, as a public man, would have to be done at all risk of offending her. He was much comforted when she began by asking him whether he had seen much of Widow Winburn's son lately.

David admitted that he generally saw him every day.

Did he know that he had left his place, and had quarrelled with Mr. Tester?

Yes, David knew that Harry had had words with Farmer Tester; but Farmer Tester was a sort that it was very hard not to have words with.

"Still, it is very bad, you know, for so young a man to be quarrelling with the farmers," said Miss Winter.

"'Twas the varmer as quarrelled wi' he; you see, miss," David answered, "which makes all the odds. He cum to Harry all in a fluster, and said as how he must drow up the land as he'd a'got, or he's place — one or t'other on 'em. And, so you see, miss, as Harry wur kind o' druv to it. Twarn't likely as he wur to drow up the land now as he wur just reppin' the benefit ov it, and all for Varmer Tester's place, wich be no sich gurt things, miss, arter all."

"Very likely not; but I fear it may hinder his getting employment. The other farmers will not take him on now, if they can help it."

"No; thaay falls out wi' one another bad enough, and calls all manner o' names. But thaay can't abide a poor man to speak his mind, nor take his own part, not one on 'em," said David, looking at Miss Winter, as if doubtful

how she might take his strictures ; but she went on, without any show of dissent,—

“I shall try to get him to work for my father ; but I am sorry to find that Simon does not seem to like the idea of taking him on. It is not easy always to make out Simon’s meaning. When I spoke to him, he said something about a bleating sheep losing a bite ; but I should think this young man is not much of a talker in general?”—she paused.

“That’s true, miss,” said David, energetically ; “there aint a quieter-spoken or steadier man at his work in the parish.”

“I’m very glad to hear you say so,” said Miss Winter, “and I hope we may soon do something for him. But what I want you to do just now, is to speak a word to him about the company he seems to be getting into.”

The constable looked somewhat aghast at this speech of Miss Winter, but did not answer, not knowing to what she was alluding. She saw that he did not understand, and went on,—

“He is mowing to-day with a gang from the heath and the next parish ; I am sure they are very bad men for him to be with. I was so vexed when I found Simon had given them the job ; but he said they would get it all down in a day, and be done with it, and that was all he cared for.”

“And ’tis a fine day’s work, miss, for five men,” said David, looking over the field ; “and ’tis good work, too, you mind the swarth else,” and he picked up a handful of the fallen grass to show her how near the ground it was cut.

“Oh, yes ; I have no doubt they are very good mowers, but they are not good men, I’m sure. There, do you see now who it is that is bringing them beer ? I hope you will see Widow Winburn’s son, and speak to him, and try



to keep him out of bad company. We should be all so sorry if he were to get into trouble."

David promised to do his best, and Miss Winter wished him good-evening, and rejoined her cousin.

"Well, Katie, will he do your behest?"

"Yes, indeed; and I think he is the best person to do it. Widow Winburn thinks her son minds him more than any one."

"Do you know I don't think it will ever go right. I'm sure she doesn't care the least for him."

"Oh! you have only just seen her once to-day for two or three minutes."

"And then, that wretched old Simon is so perverse about it," said the cousin. "You will never manage him."

"He is very provoking, certainly; but I get my own way generally, in spite of him. And it is such a perfect plan; isn't it?"

"Oh! charming, if you can only bring it about."

"Now we must be really going home, papa will be getting restless." So the young ladies left the hayfield deep in castle-building for Harry Winburn and the gardener's daughter, Miss Winter being no more able to resist a tale of true love than her cousin, or the rest of her sex. They would have been more or less than women if they had not taken an interest in so absorbing a passion as poor Harry's. By the time they reached the rectory gate they had installed him in the gardener's cottage with his bride, and mother (for there would be plenty of room for the widow, and it would be so convenient to have the laundry close at hand), and had pensioned old Simon, and sent him and his old wife to wrangle away the rest of their time in the widow's cottage. Castle-building is a delightful and harmless exercise.

Meantime, David the constable had gone towards the mowers, who were taking a short rest before finishing off the last half acre which remained standing. The person whose appearance had so horrified Miss Winter was drawing beer for them from a small barrel. This was an elderly, raw-boned woman with a skin burnt as brown as that of any of the mowers. She wore a man's hat and spencer, and had a strong, harsh voice, and altogether was not a prepossessing person. She went by the name of Daddy Cowell in the parish, and had been for years a proscribed person. She lived up on the heath, often worked in the fields, took in lodgers, and smoked a short clay pipe. These eccentricities, when added to her half-male clothing, were quite enough to account for the sort of outlawry in which she lived. Miss Winter, and other good people of Englebourn, believed her capable of any crime, and the children were taught to stop talking and playing, and run away when she came near them ; but the constable, who had had one or two search-warrants to execute in her house, and had otherwise had frequent occasions of getting acquainted with her in the course of his duties, had by no means so evil an opinion of her. He had never seen much harm in her, he had been heard to say, and she never made pretence to much good. Nevertheless, David was by no means pleased to see her acting as purveyor to the gang which Harry had joined. He knew how such contact would damage him in the eyes of all the parochial respectabilities, and was anxious to do his best to get clear of it.

With these views he went up to the men, who were resting under a large elm tree, and complimented them on their day's work. They were themselves well satisfied with it, and with one another. When men have had sixteen hours', or so, hard mowing in company, and none of

them can say that the others have not done their fair share, they are apt to respect one another more at the end of it. It was Harry's first day with this gang, who were famous for going about the neighborhood, and doing great feats in hay and wheat harvest. They were satisfied with him and he with them, none the less so probably in his present frame of mind, because they also were loose on the world, servants of no regular master. It was a bad time to make his approaches, the constable saw ; so, after sitting by Harry until the gang rose to finish off their work in the cool of the evening, and asking him to come round by his cottage on his way home, which Harry promised to do, he walked back to the village.

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